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The Week

PRESIDENT Hoover needs a Mussolini to make the revival train run on time. Here we are at election day and prosperity hasn't arrived yet! Even the organs of banks which are in the Republican circle of influence and which have always stressed the importance of "confidence," admit that the outlook is not entirely rosy. We have, to be sure, enjoyed a marked upturn in the textile industries and others which make and sell consumers' goods, and this has brought up the averages of employment and production, so that a statistical rise is shown which is slightly more than normal for the season. Though the figures are still far below the depression level of last fall, comfort is derived from the fact that we had a seasonal upturn at all, since on the toboggan slide of the past two years even that was missing. But it is noted with sorrow that the basic or primary industries, making more durable goods, have not responded. Steel has improved a little, but not so much as was hoped—it still hangs under 20 percent of capacity. Automobiles and machinery have actually slid backwards. There are few signs of activity in construction. These industries belong in the category where depression and unemployment have their widest swing, where a genuine revival must be felt eventually, and where it is often felt first. And it is also chilling to the newborn hope that commodity prices, which began the whole thing by going up last summer, have started down again.

IN THE good old days, the two absolute, permanent, solid and unchangeable fixtures in the realm of capitalism were the exchange value of the pound sterling and the price of steel rails in the United States. It is therefore interesting that in the same week both have declined—though of course from totally different immediate causes. Speculation regarding the action of the pound hovers about the question whether the British authorities are deliberately refraining from using the fund created to stabilize it, or have exhausted this fund. The official explanation is that the fund was never intended to maintain any specific value, but merely to moderate any sudden changes. What is undeniable, however, is that Great Britain has not yet, even at the depreciated pound, reached a stable balance of international payments. This undoubtedly means that her export trade has not been greatly stimulated. The situation may cause worry. As for steel rails, the price has not varied so much as a cent for years at a time. Behind the protective barrier as complete a monopoly has existed as the world ever knew. The railroads paid what the steel companies asked for the rails—and the public paid the railroads. Prosperity and depression, falling price levels, increased efficiency of production—none of these made any difference. And now the price has been reduced from $43 to $40 a ton in the hope, so it is said, that thus the railroads will in their straits be enabled to buy more. Even U. S. Steel is losing its backbone!

THE riots of the British unemployed in London and other cities serve to illustrate a striking present-day difference between the temper of the poor in England and America. The "hunger marchers" in London are in no real danger of starvation; the great majority of them are sure of getting unemployment-insurance payments for at least six months of the year and poor relief for the other six. What they are protesting (largely under Communist leadership) is the humiliation of being treated as a

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charity case at the end of the first six months, forced at that time to give an accounting of their private resources. But in America the workingman (with a few insignificant exceptions) gets no unemployment insurance at all. When he loses his job, he receives no aid from anybody until all his own resources are gone. Then he begins by undergoing the humiliation of the charity routine which the British workers find so offensive. But does the American object to running the gauntlet of application blanks, red tape, interviews and more interviews? If he does, he usually does not say so. He seems only too glad to accept whatever he can get to prevent starvation. He does not demonstrate, except when goaded to do so by someone else, like the Communists; he rarely even breaks a window or steals a loaf of bread. Europeans are accustomed to look upon America as the land of lawlessness, where individuals habitually walk rough-shod over the rights of the community in pursuit of their own ends. But a comparison of our unemployed who, at least for the present, are so meek, with the recalcitrance of the British, suggests that this view badly needs revising.

AFTER sulking in his tent for so long, Alfred E. Smith came out of it with a rush, three weeks before the end of the campaign. He made a series of speeches for the Democrats, at most of which no one could cavil. To be sure, he did not butter Mr. Roosevelt over with praise; to do so would have been ridiculous, in view of his known previous attitude, and would have laid him open to the charge of gross insincerity. The only one of his speeches which has been called in question is his first one, delivered at Newark, in which he paid his respects to the bigotry of his Republican and prohibitionist enemies in 1928. Nobody denies that what he said was true; but it is argued that he would have helped his candidate more if he had taken a lead from Mr. Roosevelt's book and specialized in sweet nothings. Possibly he might, and certainly he could have devoted his time better to the problems of the present day; but for our part we are not sorry to see him display the courage needed to speak his mind. He was more like the Al Smith of 1928 than at any time during the past four years; and his return is more than welcome.

IN LAST week's issue of The New Republic appeared an editorial, "Stealing from the Unemployed," which described some of the obnoxious practices which have grown up in the administration of relief for the victims of the depression. This article was careful to state that its criticism referred only to "a certain proportion of the investigators, who are dishonest," and that "these things are of course done without the knowledge of the higher-ups." Lest there be any misunderstanding, we wish to repeat that the dishonest relief administrator is the exception, and that a great deal of fine and devoted work is being done, both by paid social workers and volunteer aids, not only in New York, to which our article specifically referred, but throughout the country. At the same time we wish to reëmphasize our point that there will be great waste and much needless suffering so long as people insist on regarding each depression as a sudden, unexpected natural calamity and refuse to plan in advance the necessary activities to care for the victims.

THE Florida prison guard who tortured Arthur Maillefert to death has been given twenty years' imprisonment, the maximum sentence possible under the law. While he deserved his punishment, and the state of Florida is entitled to credit for endeavoring to clear its good name, it is well to remember that the system which produced the death of Maillefert is still in force in Florida and many other states. A striking picture of its operation has recently been produced for us by John L. Spivak in his book, "Georgia Nigger," (Brewer, Warren and Putnam). Though cast in the form of a novel, it is founded on fact and in an appendix he gives numerous documents and photographic evidence to support his statements. Negroes are virtually sold into slavery; they are arrested on a minor charge and turned over to employers who juggle their books to keep the victims perpetually in debt and then proceed to work them mercilessly. As has often been pointed out, conditions are frequently worse than they were before the Civil War, under slavery; for the slave owner had invested thousands of dollars in his property and had an interest in keeping the slaves alive. The contractor who has "bought" a dozen men loses no money if he works them to death and is forced to send for a new batch.

THE torture to which these helpless victims are subjected would be unbelievable if the charges were not substantiated by documentary evidence. It is no uncommon occurrence for a man to be beaten to death if he seeks to run away, or even to complain to outsiders of his condition. The victims are hung up by the hands and feet; their arms are pulled almost out of the sockets; iron hands with long spikes are clamped around their legs and they are hung up in coffinlike structures such as the one which caused Maillefert's death. The state governments are, of course, directly responsible for the continuance of these conditions. In fact, they make a profit from the suffering of the convicts, Negroes and whites: in Georgia, this amounted to $3,269,000 in four years. The responsibility of the federal government is equally obvious and equally disregarded. When Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote "Uncle Tom's Cabin," a flame of indignation swept through the North. It is a significant sign of the times that Mr. Spivak's book, describing equally horrible conditions, is received with cynicism and indifference.

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REPORTS from the mine strike district in Christian County, Illinois, indicate that the state troops have virtually abolished civil government and are conducting a military dictatorship in the interest of the Peabody Coal Company. All meetings, of course, have been forbidden. Three prominent citizens, who had expressed sympathy with the miners, were pointed out by the superintendent of the coal company and picked up by the soldiers, although they were more than three miles from any mine at the time. The commanding officer refused to release them, disavowing any allegiance to local civil authorities. The mayor, state's attorney, justices of the peace and circuit judges were ordered off the streets of Taylorville. The police chief, in full uniform, was ordered to move on by the soldiers. Two high-school girls in another town were thrown into jail when they delayed in obeying an order to move on from a street corner. All this and much more has happened, according to the reports, though the county is not under martial law. Over a thousand miners and their wives were confined in the county courthouse after the jail was filled. The American Civil Liberties Union has protested against these high-handed actions by a telegram to Governor Emmerson, saying, "Reports from city officials in Taylorville state you sent militia to Christian County on demand of the Peabody Coal Company despite opposition by local officials in order to prevent legal and peaceful picketing of coal miners and to permit their operation by non-union men."

Roosevelt's Revolution

BY THIS time any voters who have made an honest attempt to find out what the debate between Republicans and Democrats is all about must have become thoroughly confused. You have Roosevelt declaring that he is a progressive and wants a new deal, thus earning the support of Senators Norris, Wheeler, La Follette, Cutting and many lay citizens. You have Hoover and Mills declaring that Roosevelt is a revolutionary who wants a complete change in the "American system," and supporting that contention with the quaint argument that a Roosevelt victory means an unbalanced budget, inflation of the currency and government ownership of a few utilities. (As if there were anything revolutionary about that!) And then you have conservative supporters of Roosevelt saying that it is stupid to think he really offers the slightest menace to the established order, and contending that he will balance the budget, reject inflation and carry out the Hoover program of revival. Support for this position comes from Socialists and Communists who say that both candidates are as alike as two ball bearings at the hub of the capitalist machine. The next result is that Roosevelt's support is made up of (a) persons who don't like what the Republicans have done and want a drastic change and (b) persons who for some reason dislike Hoover, but want someone else to do about the same things.

What is the truth of the matter? Will Roosevelt be precisely the same kind of President as Hoover? If not, what will he do differently? And do these differences constitute a revolution? Only until the point is settled will those who are in favor of a significant alteration in our system, as well as those who are against such an alteration, know what to expect.

So far as we have been able to make out, Roosevelt's idea of a new deal, when it is boiled down from generalities to concrete proposals, refers to a set of specific reforms which do embody a real difference from the Hoover policies, but which imply no change whatever in the basic characteristics of the American economic system. Let us list briefly the more important measures which we may expect, if he carries out his promises:

He will apply emergency relief for the farmers by the "voluntary domestic allotment plan"—a carefully thought-out scheme to make agricultural tariffs effective. This is no more radical than the Farm Board idea, and harmonizes perfectly with the Republican doctrine of protection. But it may be more potent than Hoover "stabilization."

He will extend emergency relief to the unemployed from federal funds when local funds are insufficient. This differs from the Hoover policy, if at all, only because, though Hoover has favored the policy in words, he has checked it in action.

He will attempt to stimulate employment by public works. This is another case of the same.

He will support a national system of labor exchanges and compulsory employment insurance, thus bringing this country up to the stage of civilization attained by European capitalist nations years ago, and giving effect to measures which Hoover himself was formerly supposed to favor.

He will balance the budget by drastic economies and refrain from borrowing except for self-liquidating public works. If this differs from the Hoover policy, it will differ in performance, not in doctrine. But performance will mean that many of Roosevelt's other promises for relief and social services must be broken, because these things mean an enlargement, not a restriction, of public expenditures.

He will do something to regulate the stock market and holding companies, and improve the banking system. He will refrain from stimulating bull markets with optimistic statements. If these promises are skillfully fulfilled, they will strengthen the capitalist system by curbing some of its dishonesties and excesses.

He will apply federal regulations to interstate operations of public utilities and will favor the setting up of "yardsticks" under public ownership by which their performance will be measured, like Muscle Shoals—a far smaller degree of public ownership than is already practised in most other capitalist nations. The Province of Ontario in Canada is the nearest and most dramatic example of complete public ownership of electric power.

He will apply to railroads a policy which is satisfactory to unions, bosses and bondholders. *Mirabile dictu!*

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> Though he will not cancel war debts, he will try to revive international trade by bargaining for lower tariffs. But he will not abolish protection of American workers who must compete with lower standards of living abroad. We fail to understand this policy, but whatever it is, there is one thing certain about it—it is completely compatible with capitalism.
>
> He will, in some way undefined at this writing, favor industrial planning. We are willing to bet a thousand to one that when the way is defined, it will leave economic power largely where it now resides.

The upshot of all this is not so startling as the campaign speeches would indicate. No doubt Mr. Hoover sincerely believes that such an unemployment insurance and government operation of Muscle Shoals mean the end of American individualistic capitalism. He is just about stupid enough to believe that. He does not realize that the sort of individualism which arouses his enthusiastic loyalty was really ended long ago. No doubt many of Mr. Roosevelt's progressive supporters think his program really embodies a "new deal." But it embodies nothing that reaches to the heart of the existing system, and almost nothing that has not long ago been adopted by other capitalist nations without greatly changing the distribution of income, or increasing its total amount, or providing security against economic calamity. The Socialists and Communists are no doubt exaggerating when they say that the Hoover and Roosevelt programs are exactly alike. There are discernible differences between them. How important these differences are, depends on one's estimate of the stage of social evolution which we have reached. In our eyes, they are far less important than they would have been fifteen years ago. They constitute a belated application of liberalistic meliorism to a civilization which we ought to be engaged in remodeling.

The Obscene Spectacle

IF AMERICAN public life ever shows itself in worse phases than during the last few weeks of a national political campaign, we should like to know what they are. At no other time does the politicians' contempt for the intelligence of the voters reveal itself more plainly. Under the stress of the urgent necessity to win, even the ordinary, decidedly sleazy, moral standards of the average office holder are discarded; he is restrained by nothing except his own high estimate of the public's gullibility and the faint fear that a too extravagant falsehood may react upon his own party.

Rarely has a political campaign seen a more disgraceful episode than the attempt of the Republicans to create in the mind of the voter a hysterical fear that a Democratic victory would mean an economic calamity—a fear which is unjustified on historical or any other grounds. It is entirely possible that the painful recession in nearly all lines of business last week was a reflection of this fear campaign; and if the Democratic victory, which now seems inevitable, should be followed by a break in the stock market, it can quite properly be attributed, not to the fact of that victory, but to the criminally reckless action of the Republicans, who are willing to run such a serious risk rather than relinquish their rule. This fear campaign has of course sunk to the familiar level of former years: of saying to factory workers, "Unless the Republicans are elected, your job is not safe." It will, however, have less effect than in 1924 and 1928, because every worker knows that his job is not safe anyhow, and that since the Republicans are almost sure to be defeated, he might as well cast his secret ballot as he pleases and "be hung for a sheep instead of a lamb."

The attempt to frighten people into retaining the G. O. P. in power is of course only one aspect of a campaign of reckless disregard of the truth. We have commented in earlier issues on Mr. Hoover's campaign statements, characterized as strikingly by the inaccuracy of his statistics as by the false logic and ignorance of economics which he displays. Other Republican orators, and notably Mr. Ogden Mills, have been equally free with the facts, equally reckless in their predictions of disaster if the Democrats should win. If the public memory were as long as three months, the reputations of these and many other men would be destroyed; but luckily for them, the public usually remembers nothing longer than a week and very little so long as that.

If the Democrats are not open to quite the same degree of censure in this campaign, that fact is due to the accident of their position and not to any inherent virtue. The Republicans have been in control for twelve years; and they have done so many unwise and unjust things that they offer an embarrassingly easy target. But no one who knows the general temper of the Democratic party can believe that its campaign tactics differ materially in kind from those of the G. O. P. In issue-dodging, Mr. Roosevelt is quite as adept as Mr. Hoover—witness his long silence and final equivocation on the bonus, his refusal to say whether he favors recognition of Russia, his pretense that the war debts can and will be paid and his impossible promises on the score of economy in the operation of the federal government.

The explanation of all this, we think, is that as between the Republicans and Democrats there is a struggle for power without responsibility. That is to say, one or the other of these parties will win the election without ever having given any signs of understanding what is wrong in this country, or proposing adequate measures to put it right. Democrats and Republicans pretend to fight each other fiercely, but neither side ever, except by inadvertence, discusses the fundamentals of the case; and forced to invent differences and to improvise an attack in a campaign of such unreality,

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they descend to the contemptible tactics which we have been witnessing. There may be another country in the world where political debate is equally unreal, but we confess that we do not know where it is.

Everyone knows that the protest vote will play an important role in this year's campaign. Not only are millions voting for Mr. Roosevelt without enthusiasm, in order to hurt Mr. Hoover's chances, but probably two million or more persons will vote the Socialist ticket who did not do so in 1928, and several hundred thousand new adherents will support the Communists, among all these being, of course, hundreds of thousands who have not been converted to either of these brands of radicalism but are simply saying to the Republicans and Democrats, "a plague o' both your houses." There is good reason to believe that some of the protesters are disgusted, not merely with the policies of these parties, but with the general tenor of the campaign, the character of the arguments advanced, the low intellectual and moral level of most of the speeches. One particular reason for hoping that a huge protest vote will be recorded is that if it is, the politicians may be brought to realize that there is danger for them in the widespread seasickness which their methods have produced.

Mexico and the Catholic Church

NO INFORMED observer of Mexican affairs believed that the *modus vivendi* between the Catholic Church and the Mexican government, brought about in 1929, would endure. Ever since Independence in 1821, the Church has been losing ground, more rapidly than in any other Roman Catholic country. The responsibility has been largely the hierarchy's. It supported Porfirio Diaz in his military coup d'état which established his long dictatorship, established an *entente cordiale* with the land barons and played an indispensable role in maintaining their feudal system by urging upon the peons humility and obedience in this world to obtain rewards in the next. In return Diaz relaxed the Reform laws of Juarez designed to check the clergy. When the revolution, at bottom an agrarian revolt, broke loose in 1911, the clergy aligned themselves with the old regime, and when Madero was treacherously overthrown and murdered, supported the counter-revolutionary Huerta.

To destroy the clergy's temporal power then became a primary revolutionary objective, and stringent anti-clerical provisions were written into the Constitution of 1917. The hierarchy openly defied these restrictions. Each defiance brought a more vigorous retaliation. In 1926, following a repeatedly announced determination by the episcopate not to obey the Constitution, the government (which, incidentally, pays scant respect to the Constitution when so inclined) countered with a statute requiring priests to register. The bishops' countermove—doubtless with the approval of the Vatican—was to order the clergy to withdraw from the churches and abstain from sacerdotal functions. The bishops likewise endorsed a boycott designed to paralyze the nation's social and economic life, and gave tacit encouragement to an armed rebellious movement. All three offensives failed. The priests' withdrawal did not arouse the masses, who continued to worship in the churches. The boycott fell flat, and by July, 1927, the rebellion, excepting for a few guerilla bands, was crushed.

A year later it became apparent to Ambassador Dwight Morrow, with his concern for Mexico's economic rehabilitation, that complete stability could not be obtained while the conflict still smoldered. Completely beaten, the Church was ready to make peace on any terms not too openly humiliating. The government, eager for the promised prosperity (U.S.A., 1928 model) toward which Morrow's guidance seemed to lead, appeared complaisant on the controverted issues—oil, land reform, the clergy. The episcopate perforce yielded on the registration of priests, but the government permitted the face-saving reservation that each bishop could register the priests in his diocese. The exiled archbishops and bishops returned. A brief truce followed.

Two years later Vera Cruz—with an area larger than Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont combined, and a population of nearly a million and a quarter—passed a law limiting the number of priests to one for every 100,000 inhabitants—eleven priests, that is, in addition to the two bishops. Other states followed suit: Chiapas made it one priest for every 70,000. The Federal District, with a million inhabitants, limited the number to twenty-five. The federal government declared itself, in response to Catholic protests, powerless to prevent this legislation, which was permitted by the Constitution of 1917. Officially each state is sovereign; actually General Plutarco Elias Calles, the real boss of Mexico, can make and unmake state governors with only a little more indirection than Diaz practised.

Against this new sweep of anti-Catholicism Pope Pius XI uttered one of the mildest of protests in the history of such encyclicals. But his "Acerba Animi" evoked a torrent of rabid vituperation from Mexican authorities of every rank, beginning with the newly installed President, General Abelardo Rodriguez. The editor of the government organ, El Nacional, denounced the Pope's act as "criminal." And when Papal Delegate Ruiz y Flores sought gently to point out that the encyclical's purpose had been conciliatory—which obviously it was, for it urged Mexican Catholics to submit and coöperate with the authorities no matter how vexatious the laws, while reserving the right to work for their change—the government promptly deported him to the United States.

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The Papal Delegate is a native Mexican, appointed by the Vatican in 1929 to meet the Mexican prejudice against "foreign" emissaries of a creed. Nevertheless, the Mexican government now declares that by virtue of his allegiance to a foreign potentate, he has lost his Mexican nationality. Vera Cruz has since—by the same token—declared all Catholic priests "foreigners," and the movement appears likely—with the collusion of the federal authorities—to become nationwide. Since the Constitution provides that only native-born Mexicans may serve as ministers of religion, it follows that there will be no priests whatever.

If the Mexican governmental attitude were frank and aboveboard—if it were based on a social theory like that of Soviet Russia, which holds that "religion is the opiate of the people," and as such an obstacle to proletarian emancipation; if it depended merely on the conviction that a dogmatic mythology based on the supernatural has no place in an age of empiricism; if a sincere attempt were being made to substitute among an unlettered, abased and long exploited people, a workaday faith of this world for religion's promises of felicity in the next—such a program would have a certain logical validity. No such purpose exists in Mexico. Though they continue their loud mouthing of revolutionary shibboleths, no officials were ever less concerned about the welfare of people or nation, and so definitely detrimental to both. Government in Mexico today is organized for plunder. Whatever reformist ideology and idealism existed here and there during the varying conflicts of the last twenty-two years have vanished. And while the Church is less than a wraith of its former self, has lost its property and prestige and is a negligible factor in Mexican life, the *politicos* begrudge even the few coppers that still go into the offertories and collection plates. They want to eliminate the slightest competition for the last *centavo*.

Lucky Strike, Indeed!

THANKS to the protest of a spirited shareholder in the American Tobacco Company, the judicial spotlight has been thrown upon another executive bonus plan not unlike the system of Christmas gifts which Charlie Schwab was until recently accustomed to dispense. A by-law of the American Tobacco Company, initiated by its directors in 1912, authorized six senior officers to divide among themselves 10 percent of any annual profits in excess of those earned by the company in 1910. Since 1921, ten million dollars have been thus distributed. In 1930 the president received, in addition to his regular salary of $168,000 and "special cash credits" of $270,000, a bonus of $840,000! Apparently these modest rewards did not provide sufficient incentive to ensure the company of the best efforts of its officers. The directors therefore adopted an "Employee Stock Subscription Plan" which resulted in the sale to themselves, as officer-employees, of 33,000 shares of stock at the price of $25 per share when the same stock was selling on the market at $112.

For his claim that these two plans amounted to unconscionable raids upon the corporate treasury, the dissenting shareholder received scant sympathy from the majority of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals in New York. To Judge Manton, the millions which President George W. Hill and Vice-President Charles A. Penn thus received represented only reasonable compensation for their services in making "Lucky Strike" the most popular cigarette in the world. The Judge was also greatly impressed by the fact that both schemes were approved by overwhelming majorities of the stockholders. He did not consider the possibilities, suggested by Judge Swan in his refreshing dissent, that the shareholders might not have anticipated, when they adopted the by-law in 1912, that they were conferring upon their president in 1930 a bonus five times his salary, or that when they approved the vague terms of the "Employee Stock Subscription Plan," it would develop that three-fifths of the stock so issued would be alloted by directors to themselves. Neither is there any mention by the court of how many stockholders voted only through proxies chosen by those same directors.

This tobacco case affords another illuminating glimpse into the present-day workings of the traditional economic system, with its opportunities for huge profits for the insiders. It also sheds not a little light upon the prevailing sanctification by the courts of the exploiting motive of big business. It is not irrelevant to recall that it is the same Judge Manton who decided in favor of the Interborough some years ago in its efforts to set aside its contract with the city of New York, only to be reversed by the Supreme Court of the United States. More recently he aroused criticism because of his high-handed methods in appointing consent receivers for the Interborough. The layman is naturally baffled when he is told that all such judicial actions represent not the social-economic outlook of the particular judge, but impersonal law.

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Russia Revisited

I: *First Impressions*

MY FIRST impression of the difference between the Russia of 1930 and that of 1932 I received when I got to Berlin, where the resident Moscow correspondent of an important American newspaper, then on holiday, commiserated me on having to go to Russia. "I pity you," he said, "Russia is the dullest country in the world just now. They are positively settling down; and there is nothing to write about." I may add that this particular journalist, sensing the news value of what soon afterwards happened, interrupted his holiday a week or two later and returned to Moscow. He was brought back, however, not by anything that was happening in Moscow, but by the tension in the Far East and the possibility that the U.S.S.R. might be involved.

When I got to the Russian capital myself I could not but concur in his judgment of the situation. It was radically different from what it had been in 1930, and from a newspaper man's point of view certainly merited the description "dull." The political tension of two years before had disappeared. True, the newspapers indulged in the traditional exhortation to fight the "Right Opposition"; but there was no Opposition. And there was no life or spirit in the old crusade. The leadership of the Communist party was no longer a matter of dispute: Stalin seemed finally to have established himself in that position, and the general line of the party policy went unchallenged. Rykov, formerly chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, had been relegated to the decent obscurity of Postmaster General. Bukharin had exchanged the political platform for the more congenial task of directing research work on the Five Year Plan. Kamenev, once Lenin's foremost lieutenant, had started a new career as editor of the works of Alexander Hirzen and Goethe. And Tomsky, the founder and leader of the trade-union movement, had been promoted to the position of head of the State Publishing Department. Since then, of course, Kamenev, Zinoviev and a number of others have been dismissed from their posts and read out of the party.

The general atmosphere was less strained than it had been when I last visited Russia. A tendency toward conciliation was perceptible, in noteworthy contrast to that frenzy of suspicion and persecution which had animated the trials of the so-called wreckers in 1930. The engineers, many of them just released from prison, had met the friendly gesture of the government halfway and were seemingly content with their new privileged position, now equal to that of the workers. The intense propaganda for the Five Year Plan, a marked feature of 1930, had completely lapsed. The illuminated signs and flowerbeds advertising it had disappeared. So too had the white-lettered scarlet banners which used to proclaim it in every street. The press had ceased to display it in the old fashion. The Plan was now an old story; and the discussion of it in Pravda or Izvestia was no longer dramatic and hysterical but stern and matter of fact.

I do not mean to suggest that the energy and ardor of the earlier years of reconstruction have waned; only that they have been qualified and quickened by a certain maturity and misgiving. The stage now reached is one that demands deliberation rather than precipitation, persistent and sustained effort rather than enthusiasm and impetuosity. Along with boundless confidence in the ultimate success of the Plan there is noticeable worry and anxiety because of the enormous scope of the enterprise and the tremendous difficulties of management and control.

Of all the big problems which await solution in the U.S.S.R., that of the central management is by far the most difficult and the most important. At present the entire work of control and management is in the hands of a comparatively small group composed of the Bolshevik "Old Guard" and a few engineers and administrators who have made their way to the front lately by the extraordinary enterprise and industry they have displayed. The number of these supermen, or "Cyclopeans" as they are called, is difficult to ascertain. I have been told that there are a thousand of them, but I fancy that this must be an exaggerated estimate. The supreme control must obviously rest with a much smaller number. Of the ability and assiduity of this group there can be no doubt; their talents, their endurance and their devotion may entitle them to rank as supermen. And it is conceivable that up to the present stage they were indispensable, but the enterprises they are called upon to direct are rapidly getting beyond the control of any set of supermen. This is being slowly and ruefully recognized but the difficulty remains: it is how to obtain men who can be entrusted with the task and who will accept and assume responsibility.

"In a period of reconstruction the mastery of technique is the all-important thing." Such is Stalin's dictum, and this is the Bolshevik slogan of today. It replaces all other appeals and drives.

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The older kinds of Socialist labor discipline—such as "Socialist emulation" and "shock methods"—which held the field two years ago are still in force, but they are being relegated more or less into the background in favor of a new drive for the acquisition of superior skill. The whole laboring population from the youngest apprentice to the oldest worker is being stimulated by the demand for an increasing skill and by the great opportunity for personal advancement it affords.

"Raise your qualification!" is the slogan of today, and a peasant who arrives in a town to become a hodman not only strives to become a fully qualified bricklayer in a few weeks' time, but is officially encouraged and even driven to reach this position in less than three weeks. The Central Institute of Labor—the body responsible for the organization of work and works and for the mass training of the workers—claims that its methods are now so elaborate and coördinated that it can turn out expert bricklayers in this time.

Obviously these methods of high-speed training are far from being ideal. But they probably represent the only way in which Russia can meet her colossal needs in this field. Though the country obtains in this way a more or less satisfactory supply of trained workers, it stands desperately in need of highly skilled foremen, technicians and engineers. The training of such men cannot proceed at the same pace as that of the mass of unskilled or semi-skilled workers. And though the government is doing its utmost to accelerate such training and to procure native recruits, it has to admit that in this respect it must in the main look abroad for the necessary supplies.

There are already thousands of such engineers and technicians, mostly German and American, in the U.S.S.R. and tens of thousands could easily be absorbed by industry.

Of the major impressions I received in revisiting Russia this year, the most welcome was the practical absence of queues outside the shops, which themselves seemed to have undergone a change. There were fewer of the old coöperative shops, and a new kind of shop was in evidence. Some of these were obviously well stocked and full of customers, and others were making quite an ambitious attempt at window-dressing, a most unusual sight in Moscow. The former kind are called "closed distributors," that is, shops at which only registered customers are allowed to deal. The latter are styled "commercial shops," that is, shops at which all sorts of goods can be purchased not at a controlled but at a so-called commercial price—a price which allows a larger margin of profit than is customary in the coöperative or the closed shops.

These two new types of shops represent a definite departure from post-revolutionary customs, and it is quite conceivable that they foreshadow the system of distribution which will be in force in the near future when rationing is abolished and the supply of goods will be controlled by a managed price level.

Of these new types the closed shops are of course the most important and constitute an entirely new development. The first of these shops were opened more than a year ago at some of the factories, but it was only in the winter of 1931-32 that they assumed their present prominence. Today every big factory or group of factories and every important government department has its own "closed distributor." The Moscow Militia (Police), the Commissariat of Heavy Industries, the Society of Former Political Prisoners, the foreign specialists, all are registered at their own closed shops—so that this new "distributive" system embraces not only the entire working class but the bulk of the Soviet civil service, and probably accounts for the shopping of two-thirds of the Moscow population.

The first impression one gets of this system is that it is destroying the old equalitarian principle in distribution by creating privileged groups of customers, who obtain better and, what is equally important, more secure, supplies. The Bolshevik leaders realize quite well the implications of this new system, and I have not met a single one who was pleased with it or did not wish for its abolition. But they maintain that in the present shortage of goods it is imperative that the workers should be guaranteed their supplies.

The objection made to these shops is not one of principle; on the contrary it is quite possible that distribution may best be organized more or less on these lines. What is disliked is the preferential treatment given to certain classes and the exclusion from these privileges of so large a proportion of the population. In Moscow almost a third of the inhabitants have no access to these shops, and the proportion of excluded persons in the provincial towns is probably larger. The plain citizen who is left outside the closed shops has to rely for his supplies on the ordinary coöperative stores, where he gets his rations of the necessities of life, and on the commercial shop for goods outside this category.

Whether this system leads to a real inequality of supplies is doubtful; in many cases the difference between the standard of supplies for the privileged and that for the unprivileged is not very great. The point is that the unprivileged have first to make a greater effort to obtain supplies and then have to pay ever so much more for them.

The difference in the price level in the various shops and restaurants still further disturbs the value of the currency. Everybody who lives in or who goes to Russia tries to calculate the value of the ruble in terms of gold. But after making many attempts myself and after discussing the matter with currency experts, I have come to the conclusion that the ruble cannot be valued at present in any settled way. Its value will vary in

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accordance with what is purchased, where it is spent and by whom it is spent. If it is, for instance, spent on lodgings (outside hotels), on electric light, on gas, on trams or on other public utilities such as stamps, telephone and telegraph service, books and newspapers, the ruble retains its full gold value and is probably worth more. Spent in the coöperative shop on staple commodities, it will be found to have depreciated slightly, while it depreciates from 30 to 60 percent if it is spent in the free market or on uncontrolled goods in the commercial shops.

Confronted with these new departures some of us may be inclined to draw a parallel between them and the times of the New Economic Policy. Some observers, indeed, describe the present situation as the beginning of a neo-N.E.P.; and Stalin's recent decrees, permitting collective farms and individual peasants some trading in grain on the open market, are certain to increase this impression. But such an idea is surely wrong. All that these concessions signify is that certain difficulties have to be immediately met. The concessions are nothing but tactical moves in full accordance with the general Bolshevik principle. At the utmost they represent nothing more than a repudiation of the more naïve and unworkable manifestations of the equalitarian spirit. The main significance of what is going on in Russia today lies, indeed, in the attempt to find a *practical* solution of certain urgent problems.

To find a harmony between the abstract claims of communism and the concrete conditions of an actual communist state is the great need in Russia today. We have become so accustomed to opposing the communist antithesis of complete equality to the capitalist thesis of inequality that the moment we see the Bolsheviks deviating from rigid equality we are inclined to declare that their experiment has failed. We ought to recognize that the discovering of a *via media* between the capitalist and the communist doctrines might well prove to be the most vital and significant outcome of the experiment.

MICHAEL FARBMAN.

Moscow.

This is the first of a series of articles on present-day Russia by Mr. Farbman. In his second article, appearing next week, he will discuss the agrarian revolution.—THE EDITORS.

Maiden Aunts as Class Warriors

A YEAR has passed since the British electorate in a spasm of financial panic invested Mr. MacDonald and his national government with omnipotence. The panic subsided at once. We reconciled ourselves with enthusiasm to the abandonment of gold; so much so, indeed, that the Tory party's annual conference has actually passed a resolution in favor of its replacement by a commodity index. The national government, which might, in the virtual absence of an opposition, have ruled as absolutely as any dictator, has behaved with moderation. It has established protection, practised economy and converted a part of the national debt, but there its achievement, and presumably its ambitions, end. A visitor from Mars, taking breath after his interminable fall through stellar space, would find our island the most tranquil and soothing corner of this planet. No creative impulse stirs it, no fervor for change or readjustment, no impatience, nor any visible sign either of idealism or fear. It conserves what it still has, watching the diminution of private incomes and public revenues a little ruefully. It hoards and retrenches, discovering in the process that it can be content, at the expense of the common people, with an appreciably lower level of civilization. This is the mentality of the maiden aunt. She can do nothing, create nothing, nor can she expand her inherited income: so she hoards and pinches herself, and learns in bad times to dispense with a maid.

In retrospect what has happened in England is a minor engagement in the class struggle. Do maiden aunts, you may ask, engage in anything so unseemly as class warfare? Assuredly they do. They cut wages: they make unemployment: they contrive, on a small scale, but with great tenacity, to divert to themselves a small tribute from the collective labor of the masses beyond their curtained doors. Faced with a diminished total national income, the middle and upper classes in England turned their backs on all the active male expedients for increasing it, whether by the expansion of credit, the launching on a great scale of public works, or the replanning of industry and agriculture. It saw salvation in the retrenchment of all public expenditure which benefits the working class —education, the health services, housing and unemployment insurance (vulgarly known as "the dole"). It hoped by these means to reduce the direct taxes which fall on its own shoulders. Its conversion to a tariff was part of the same process of shifting burdens. It believed that it could transfer to the mass of consumers some portion of its own peculiar load of income tax.

That is the real explanation of the Liberal betrayal of free trade. It is to insult the intelligence of Sir Herbert Samuel and his friends to believe that they supposed last October that free trade was safe. It is nonsense to suggest that they really imagined that they could put the Tories in power

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and avoid protection. To do the Tories bare justice, they were perfectly open in their plans. The meaning of this strange episode in English history is that these Liberals shared the general attitude of the middle class. There was much less in the national pool to divide, and therefore they joined a coalition of middle-class parties for the purpose of diminishing the working-class share. Expressed in political terms, they subordinated every other purpose to the immediate necessity of crushing the Labor party. This is not their habitual attitude. In normally prosperous times they used to stand for the expansion of the social services, of which the more costly are their creation. For many a long year they advocated and fitfully practised an alliance with the Labor party. But times of contraction, when incomes fall, demand another strategy. The income tax hurt, and Liberals accordingly waged the class war in the spirit of the maiden aunt. It seemed to them at the moment more important to destroy the Labor party than to defend free trade.

The lapse of a year has brought disillusion with it. The policy of retrenchment has operated as every Socialist and, indeed, every economist with a modern mind predicted that it must. The panic stoppage of public works and housing schemes, both national and municipal, the cutting of official salaries, the reduced expenditures on schooling and health, the fall of real wages in some of the chief industries—all this has paralyzed enterprise, lowered demand and lessened buying power. The result is that unemployment, after a brief improvement when first we abandoned the gold standard, grows remorselessly month by month.

The Exchequer has, indeed, scored a remarkable success, from the standpoint of maiden aunts, by converting ten billion dollars of the national debt. It will on this head make a substantial saving in future budgets. But this very success is, of course, the most eloquent proof of the depression. It is only because the yield of industrial stocks is precarious and low, only because no one dares invest in any ambitious scheme of development, only, in short, because we are inert and hopeless, that people are satisfied to lock their money in government bonds at any rate of interest, however low. The other day, indeed, a further little debt of $750,000,000 was converted at 2 percent. This process of converting debt is more, however, than a symptom of the depression: it is one of its causes. The treasury has laid an embargo, while it proceeds, on public issues of stocks, which might compete with it. It deliberately damps down enterprise. It fosters unemployment of capital, precisely as it has made unemployment of labor. It makes a depression and calls it economy.

At the end of a year I think that an objective reporter may allow himself to record a perceptible decline in the government's popularity. By-elections prove it. What they chiefly show is a lack of interest in public affairs: the whip of panic has ceased to crack. But the government's poll declines more sharply than that of the opposition, and the Labor party has won back three of its lost seats. The resignation of Lord Snowden and the Liberal Ministers corresponds to no discoverable revival of the faith in free trade: there will be no rally behind these invertebrate champions. But it does mean a certain liberation of public criticism. The average man is no longer intimidated by this omnipotent government: it is perceptibly less "national" than it was. There is a rather general tendency to examine its record. The Ottawa Convention rouses no enthusiasm even among those who have abandoned doctrinaire free trade. It is an unskillful piece of work, if one dissects it from our insular standpoint, for it makes substantial and unequivocal concessions to the dominions, in return for smaller and contingent gains for British trade. At best it means a patriotic diversion in our exports, but no probability of any total increase. Viewed from the cosmopolitan angle, it raises the general level of tariffs throughout the world. It offends constitutional purists by fettering the discretion of Parliaments for many years ahead. It has justly alarmed the engineering industry by its interruption to Russian trade.

This Ottawa Convention was the chief dish in the government's menu. The rest of it is even more unappetizing. Liberals kept silence when one of themselves as Minister for Education told us that we must do without new schools, but if unavoidably the need arose, then we must make shift with temporary shacks. They become vocal again, as his Tory successor reduces the number of free places in the public secondary (*i.e.*, advanced) schools, subjects the parents of those who receive this advantage to a means test, and raises the fees to other children. Within the working class the anger at the government's handling of the dole is rapidly passing the frontiers of self-control. The reduction in the amount of benefit is hard to bear, but it is the humiliating inquisition, on the hated Poor Law model, into the circumstances of unemployed families which has so deeply offended the self-respect of the workers. The Labor party confines itself to bitter verbal protests, but in the slums of our seaports the Communists, negligible as a political force, are organizing riots, which have been suppressed with a use of force rarely necessary in our law-abiding island. This danger signal has been noted by the Liberals, and even Sir Herbert Samuel, a week after his resignation, had begun to attack the administration of the means test to which the longer standing cases of unemployment are subjected.

Foreign policy fares no better. It would be flattery to say that there is any general enthusiasm for an advanced policy on disarmament, or for a sterner attitude towards Japanese imperialism. Idealism does not flourish in a period of contraction. None the less, the unskillfulness of British

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diplomacy, its unintelligible insincerities, the general impression that no clear brain controls it, cause something near dismay. One leading Liberal publicist has called boldly for Sir John Simon's dismissal. In short, the resignation of the Liberal Ministers means that the more open-minded section of the English middle class is losing faith in the strategy of maiden aunts. After all, contraction has not led to a reduction of income tax. It has only produced further shrinkage of incomes. Accordingly the Liberals organize demonstrations to welcome the prodigal Ministers back, and talk once more about free trade.

What, meanwhile, is happening in the "National" camp? Nothing is audible but a call for further economy: the maiden aunts are still in the ascendant, and every Tory Member of Parliament has for platform use his list of the things which the poor can do without, ranging from sanitary houses to free schools. Wages fall rapidly, while sterling prices and the cost of living stand immovably still. Behind the scenes the shrewder realists propose, I suspect, to go on contracting until debt conversion has reached its limit, and wages have touched rock-bottom. They will then, about the date of the World Economic Conference, engineer a contrary movement of expansion—if, indeed, the world can be induced to accept the ingenious scheme of international inflation which the experts have prepared. For this supreme moment, when his personality may work its crowning miracle, the Prime Minister holds himself in reserve. Rarely addressing any audience less exalted than his fellow premiers of Europe, he waits his moment, tolerating but not directing the maiden aunts. Rumor whispers, from time to time, that he too has his doubts of the popularity of this government, and may in due course once again save the nation from a ministry of his own making.

H. N. Brailsford.

London.

The Fallacy of Local Relief

FEDERAL aid for the forgotten families of the unemployed was finally and reluctantly made available by the meager appropriation of $300,000,000 before Congress adjourned; and the act "to relieve destitution," broaden the lending powers of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and "create employment by providing for and expediting a public-works program," was signed by the President on July 21. In the summer of 1931 the newspapers reported that the President in the security of his Rapidan camp was "girding for a struggle against the dole"; but in the summer of 1932 he grudgingly approved the dole in principle, although various ways and means were devised to prevent its benefits from reaching the forgotten families.

Problems of relief, and particularly relief financing, are so important and are likely to remain so serious during the fourth winter of unemployment that the Federal Aid Emergency Appropriation as now administered calls for some examination.

The first section of the act to "relieve destitution" provides that the federal appropriation is "to be used in furnishing relief and work relief to needy and distressed people and in relieving the hardship resulting from unemployment." But the act also contains a very tragic joker, for it provides (Section 1c) that the Governor of any state, in applying for aid, must not only "certify the necessity for such funds," but must also certify that the resources of the state "including moneys then available and which *can be made available*" either by the state or by its political subdivisions or by private contributions are inadequate to meet its relief needs. The result is that, no matter what the degree of destitution may be in any state, if the political pundits of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation think that Pennsylvania or Illinois ought to meet the need locally, the members of the Corporation can sit comfortably back, refuse the applications for relief loans and tell the Governors to go home and raise local public or private funds, while the families of the unemployed are forgotten.

Having adopted the principle of "local relief," on the basis of the statutory reference to "moneys that can be made available," the R. F. C. has been very busy for the last two months granting to one state or another a fraction of the help needed and asked for; or, as in the well known case of Governor Pinchot's request, refusing help entirely or harshly delaying action. The condition of the people is not the important point to the Corporation. They want to know whether some financially incompetent local government cannot be made to meet the need. Ten weeks after the $300,000,000 "emergency" appropriation had been made, only $35,455,171 of it had been spent!

Vigorous critics have charged that the R. F. C. is nullifying the intent of Congress. Certainly the expenditure of so small a percentage of the direly needed fund was not due to lack of applications. When the bill was first passed, the plight of several of the great destitute cities was at once presented through the Governors of their states. Within ten days after the passage of the emergency appropriation, thirteen states had applied for sums that totaled $171,500,000. Among these states were

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Pennsylvania, Illinois, Michigan and Indiana. The city of Philadelphia had closed its relief stations because of lack of funds before the end of June, and tragedy lived through the summer with the forgotten families of the unemployed and with their hungry and pallid children while the R. F. C. self-righteously lectured Governor Pinchot about what Pennsylvania ought to have done.

Wisconsin was loaned $3,000,000, less than half the amount requested by Governor Phil La Follette to provide relief from September 1 to January 1, 1933, in fifty-seven destitute counties. The Governor of Kentucky asked for $1,107,093 to meet relief needs in 108 necessitous counties, but the R. F. C. gave $672,550 to forty-one counties only and admonished the Governor that Kentucky had taken no action as a state in meeting its relief needs.

The situation in Chicago has been tragic, although Illinois has been granted a much more generous share of the loans than any other state. Illinois has had a well organized and competently directed state commission for the past year, and members of this Emergency Relief Commission were in Washington early in the summer, urging the passage of the Emergency Loan Appropriation. Chicago was facing the closing of its relief stations in July, and the representatives of the Illinois Commission were almost literally sitting on Washington doorsteps waiting for the word that federal relief loans had finally been made available. On July 27, Illinois was granted its first loan of three millions. This was, however, less than a month's rations for Illinois, and the home folks were greatly disappointed that they had not been given the ten million emergency loan that had been asked for.

On August 18, Illinois was back in Washington and obtained another loan of $6,000,000, although a careful estimate was presented asking for $23,000,000 to carry the various relief stations to the first of January; and this time the R. F. C. complacently instructed the Governor of Illinois and the Corporation Counsel of Chicago that it was "the plain intent" of the act that relief funds should merely be supplementary to local public or private relief. Whether the R. F. C. is correct about the statutory "plain intent" will certainly be due for a hearing when Congress assembles!

In less than a month, after a fruitless special session of the state legislature, Illinois was back in Washington with an urgent request for a loan of $37,000,000 to keep its relief stations open until proper action could be expected from the new legislature that is now in process of being elected. A grant of $5,000,000 was made, and the R. F. C. again warned the state of Illinois and its financially crippled subdivisions to "make further immediate efforts to meet their own needs."

Finally, when the Illinois legislature had passed an inadequate relief measure, giving promise of further action after the election, another loan of $6,303,150 was obtained from the R.F.C. on October 27 for November's relief bill. This action followed an urgent appeal from representatives of the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission who had gone to Washington while menacing protests were being organized by various unemployed groups against the relief reductions made necessary in October which had caused great suffering in Chicago.

The members of the Corporation, all presidential appointees, have apparently set up a definite policy of "helping only those who help themselves in matters of relief" because the present administration believes in "local relief." But there are two questions here: first, is there any merit in this theory of local responsibility for relief; and, second, even if there were, should the families of the destitute be allowed to go hungry while the various governmental units play battledore and shuttlecock with someone's neglected obligations? While the national government battles with the state government and the state government battles with the city or county government to make sure that the other governmental agency does its duty, millions of destitute people are supported on very inadequate relief rations and the icy winds of winter are on the way.

Our major difficulty in America lies in the fact that antiquated "pauper laws," very little changed in principle from the English poor laws of 1601, still remain on our statute books. In the days when the poor laws were written, the state government was more remote from the people than Washington is today. A few states or cities or counties have set up modern social-welfare machinery with the name public welfare substituted for poor law, but most of the states have not concerned themselves about modernizing the old poor-relief system; and because it was a local system in Elizabethan England, the present Washington authorities think it must go on being a local system until the end of time.

There is really no "principle" involved here. There is only an old tradition embodied in some very musty statutory regulations. Many of our local governments have no reason for existing except that, once established, they are hard to disestablish. Modern students of government and liberal political leaders like ex-Governor Lowden have proposed abolishing county lines and certain other local subdivisions on the dual ground of their being unnecessary and, almost inevitably, incompetently managed. The system of local poor relief has certainly had a long history of wasteful administration.

The principle of local relief belongs to parochial England of the sixteenth century and not to modern America. It is the doctrine of a day and age when a man's parish was his world—not the accepted doctrine of any modern theory of local government, central government or any other kind of government. Local relief is not like parental love. There is nothing immutable and sacred about it. It belongs

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to the days when national funds went to the king and the king's ministers and the king's mistresses, when no one in London knew or cared about local highways or village destitution. The world has changed since that day.

But the so-called principle of local relief has been applied by the R. F. C. only to the human victims of the depression and not to the corporations. The administration did not tell General Dawes and other private bankers that they could each have a little help in driblets, but they must go home and wait until the city council or the county board or the state legislature did its part. The members of the Corporation were able to understand that banks must be helped promptly; but they could see the misery of the people prolonged indefinitely with strange unconcern.

No one thinks that the statesmen of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation are indifferent to human suffering. They are only business men who are too far removed from the actual scenes of destitution. If their imaginations could picture these forgotten families of the millions of competent and thrifty workmen now reduced to the status of paupers, they would come to their aid and not balance an antiquated principle of government responsibility against the food for our people.

After all, the emergency loans to the states are genuine interest-bearing loans on ironclad security. Certainly none of the banks can have offered anything better in the way of security, for the emergency act carefully provides that if the states have not paid their relief borrowings by 1935 the federal government is to begin a series of deductions from the federal allotments for highway construction that would otherwise go to the delinquent states. No one knows, of course, what kind of securities the R. F. C. has in its various bank portfolios, but clearly nothing can be better than the guarantees provided in the statute for the state relief loans. Apparently it is only the Corporation's love for the supposed "principle" of local relief that has for the most part dictated their paring of the numerous state requests for help for the destitute.

The plain facts that Washington must face are that the United States can get money, and the local governments are everywhere bankrupt and incompetent. The politicians and not the people are responsible for the fact that we have an old-fashioned taxation system that makes it impossible through the maze of state constitutions, city charters and statutory limitations on the raising of poor funds to get money swiftly for local emergency needs. The administration has shown that money is available for banks and railroads. The loan of eighty or ninety millions to the former chairman of the R.F.C. is well known and much discussed in Chicago. People believe that money is now available to help them, and no "principle" of local government, whether it is right or wrong, will satisfy men who see their children hungry.

Chicago, Ill. EDITH ABBOTT.

Hollywood on the Slide

RECENT rumors report that Hollywood, so long bankrupt in all other respects, is now financially bankrupt as well and that the industry which has spent so many years in its infancy may die even before the age of puberty. If the present state of Hollywood is an indication, rumor seems to be right. There will be very little mourning. We shall be spared the tears even of fans if any conclusion is to be drawn from the uncountable hordes who nowadays stay away from picture theatres. The long suffering enlightened may be depended on to greet the obsequies with a roar of brutal joy. In the studios dazed incredulity takes turn about with frenzied activity in any wrong direction. Hollywood drifts to its doom very much, one feels, as the aristocrats of old St. Petersburg drifted to theirs, despairingly, but unable to grasp the facts.

Three of the biggest studios, Hollywood admits, have little reason for not folding up at any moment. The end thus brought in view is that the studios will cease to function as producing organizations and become mere plants in which pictures may be made by whosoever feels impelled to make them. The highly desirable result of this might be that pictures would come out of Hollywood comparable to what Russia formerly turned out before Germany took the artistic lead away from her.

The immediate causes of Hollywood's collapse are manifold, and no one could go scientifically into them without a fairly exhaustive analysis of Wall Street banking and stock operations and the present difficulty of raising money. Behind these technicalities, however, lies the simple fact that Hollywood's knees are giving way under its own weight. And because Hollywood's collapse happens to offer a highly visible picture of American capitalism at its most foolish, it merits the examination we should accord any welcome phenomenon.

It merits examination all the more in that it has fundamentally nothing to do with the depression, but, like the depression itself, derives from the ludicrous and tragic fallacies of our whole system. This Golconda of the entertainment racket grew quickly from its humble beginnings in a village barn to the proportions it acquired after the War, when the movie which cleared a mere hundred thousand

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of profit was accounted a failure and fan magazines spawned on every newsstand and "It" was discovered and Roxy set out on his career of Babel building and a picture might cost three millions of dollars without the producing pulse missing a beat. Expense made no difference. Extravagance was an old wives' word. Capitalism had at last found a game which could not lose. I remember the glories of ten years ago when I saw a director, whose jazz orchestra followed him over the countryside in a second Rolls, keep seven hundred extras waiting three days because the spirit of shooting was not upon him. And what if he did? Put up another Monte Carlo Casino setting, call in a thousand more extra girls, pay the star fifteen grand a week if she wants it, get in as many feet of wet smacks as Pennsylvania will let you, leave it to Will Hays to explain that wet smacks are educational, call the result a purpler kind of passion (if there *is* a purpler), don't disturb anybody or mention politics or religion or anything that has any real bearing on real life or the Republicans, let her go, boys, the public eats it up, order yourselves another Sears-Roebuck Spanish palace.

Golcondas seldom remain monopolies. They drip their infectious sweat of greed even on the small fry. The mouths of the small fry naturally took to watering. Theatre owners began to ask higher and higher percentages of the gross. Then, because greed always reinfects its source, the makers of pictures bought or built their own theatres. Why should they not crowd the small fry out and keep all the gravy for themselves? Their pictures had made picture theatres to be, and pictures could not lose. So they proceeded to cutting each other's throats, and the theatre chain of one would not exhibit the pictures of another except at even more exorbitant percentages. In the end no studio had standing which did not own a larger and more lavish theatre chain than any rival. The result was that every major street corner in the land shone with a gilt and mirrored movie palace given over to the public to "eat it up" in, and the industry had rung its own death knell.

For the chains of theatres proved to be boomerangs. Once the studios owned them, they had to be used. To use them profitably many more pictures had to be manufactured. The studios made a bitter discovery. They found that easy money cannot create brains. It was all like a hideously inverted house-that-Jack-built. The studios could not get the brains to write the stories with which to make the pictures with which to fill their theatres. They did the best they could: they made the stories they had over and over. It used to be said of one Hollywood producer that it was useless to try to sell him stories, because he already had a story. They could still say as much of all the others. Only a year ago I went to a studio to see a series of scenes, one each from each of four current productions. Every scene, except for superficial changes of costume and personnel, was precisely the duplicate of every other. It was the scene in which the lover leaves his mistress to marry a rich girl and the mistress, who, you remember, is a prostitute with a heart of gold, suffers a lot but is pretty brave about it because she knows what life is. It has always been a good scene, but no scene is that good, and four of a kind seemed to me to show the studio's paucity of ideas for that season.

Suddenly audiences began diminishing and the gilt and mirrored theatres earned less and less. That ominous fact first became manifest about six years ago. Stories that had always been good were good no longer. Not the glamors of screen personalities nor the superlatives of press agents nor even vaudeville performers in prologue assembled aided matters. No one knows what might not have happened had not some diabolical spirit chosen that dark moment to invent the talkie. Almost overnight, it seemed, boards creaked when walked upon, running water sounded like so many sleigh bells, revolver shots like breaking chinaware and Garbo spoke and once more the public stood in line.

But greed betrayed the unfortunate producer again. Sound proved merely another boomerang. It cut off the foreign-language market (which had got to be nearly 40 percent of a picture's gross), and increased the cost of production appallingly. As I remember, back in the theme-song era of '28, the advent of sound jumped the cost of stage overhead from five hundred a week for a silent stage to twelve thousand a week for one equipped for sound. I remember, too, how it occurred to me at the time that the industry was going to learn what failures really mean. Because a bad silent picture could at least seem restful, while a bad talkie, with the demand sound makes on the attention, soon proved to be the outstanding bore of modern times. And I was right. In the great days, as I have said, a flop cleared a cool hundred thousand. I can myself claim authorship for one super-feature talking classic of which I have lately been hopefully told that it may net a loss of less than half a million. And all the time the admirable technician forces new and more costly perfections upon his bewildered picture-producing victims.

The picture producer can find no way out. He cannot trim his sails to increased costs and decreased returns. He has addicted the public to his lavishness, and the public, not unlike that of the Roman Coliseum, seems determined to crucify him upon it. It is useless of course to tell him that art might prove a satisfactory substitute for vast budgets. He knows much better than that. He has never asked for real brains or real ideas. What he wants of his story-tellers is a combination of mere technical ingenuity with a glib willingness to imitate reigning hits. So he keeps on desperately in the old wasteful way making the old tripe with all the old lack of organization, direction and efficiency. A

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dollar may be a dollar to some of us. To him it has changed from a bauble to a menace, and the one is economically as unsound as the other. "Give me a nice love story with plenty of sex and three big splashes in it"—I quote orders I once received in Hollywood. One of the splashes, a handsome implausible banquet scene, went into the cutter's can because the director had not taken the trouble to ascertain that the picture would be long enough without it. That single scene represented twenty-eight thousand of the producer's dollars. Need we wonder that Hollywood is going broke?

The better elements of the place are conscious of its shortcomings. "I have looked for years"—so one of the better-element producers once said to me—"for a director with a grown-up mind, but I haven't found one yet." It occurs to me that this and much else in this article had far better not have been brought up by one who has been so grateful a beneficiary of Hollywood's extravagance. But then the entire article comes under the head of biting the hand that feeds.

Now the public has once more taken to spending its evenings at home. But I exonerate the depression. The infinitely repetitious inanity and falseness of the Hollywood product would have done for Hollywood in the best of times. The end of its fetishes and formulas was in sight. Glamor, romance, sex, "separate the lovers in the second reel" and the happy ending may have their merits but are not all of life. Even the twelve-year-old mind wearies at last, for the twelve-year-old mind happens to inhabit the inexhaustibly varied living world. But Hollywood has never perceived the life around it. Try to interest them there in any documentary treatment of the drama of present American conditions: they answer—drab! Try to sell them a scenario based upon the social revolution of which all life in these times must be part: Will Hays will stop you. Will Hays, the author of those exquisite instructions to screen writers: "Good taste must be emphasized in dealing with bridal nights, men and women in bed together and the deliberate seduction of young girls." Hollywood and Will Hays together still operate under the delusion that the screen is for fiction only, that fiction is romance exclusively, that people want only to be anesthetized and that the true, the living and the disturbing are and must always remain unpalatable.

Hollywood claims that taste and courage do not pay. Hollywood never has claimed art standing for moving pictures. They are an industry and studios are factories, and factories and industries must be made to pay. Hollywood has learnt as much from its few experiments. Many's the brave story, play and book has gone into Hollywood. Why do they emerge so emasculated in their cinema dress? Because Hollywood does not dream how its lack of taste and courage castrates even the good things it attempts.

Hollywood knows no more of taste and courage than it knows of economy, and the lesson it will not learn is that all three, when they are real, do pay. The screen is no less an art medium because our studios do not know how to use it. There is no need to point again to the foreign product. There is no need to repeat that for the cost of one super-feature fake-epic depiction of gangsters, young love, divorce or aviation dare-deviltry, any competent cameraman could set forth upon our American highways and bring back a dozen real epics fashioned of real life. Whether employed for fictional, documentary or propagandist purposes, the screen is there (in America as in Russia), an unrivaled medium for the swift and dramatic summary of the life around us.

Why has Hollywood thus missed its great chance and lost even its prosperity as well? Because American pictures are made by morons? Because the American public is more of the same? Not wholly, I think. I do not find the Hollywood producer less intelligent than any other normally reactionary captain of industry, and I am convinced that the American public, unaware of itself though it may be, is at least the equal of any other public. I find a geographical explanation for Hollywood, for its rise and fall, for its vigor and sterility.

Hollywood is a part of that five-and-ten metropolis called Los Angeles, where you can watch oranges growing on the same postcard with snow-clad mountains, and to which the Middle Western *kulaks* carry their savings to wait for the Great Reaper. Many of the *kulaks* grow side-whiskers and pick up odd jobs as English country gentlemen whenever Hollywood has a London club to shoot. Many more of them attend divine service under the auspices of Aimee Semple MacPherson. The less godly devote an occasional evening to soap-boxing. In other towns soap-boxes are things from which speeches are made. In Los Angeles the soap-box is employed to stand upon for a better view of one's favorite movie queen as she attends opening nights in an ermine coat rented for the occasion. Almost all the *kulaks* read the well padded columns in which the reactionary Los Angeles Times reports the activities of the Better America Federation. The Better Americans (*kulaks* of the older and headier vintages) make it their business to tell Southern California that it will remain God's country so long as it keeps a sharp eye out after radicals. The Better Americans uphold the laws of the land by putting still better Americans in jail illegally. Still better Americans in Los Angeles consist of anyone suspected of thinking conditions might be improved.

There used to be a myth about a place called the Sargossa Sea. It was said to be an area of the Atlantic in which the winds and currents deposited any seaweed and derelicts for which the balance of the ocean had no use. Similarly, Los Angeles attracts a good part of the less useful or desirable

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elements in what is generally, if vaguely, known as Americanism. In fact, Los Angeles offers a most easily visible cross-section of what one likes least about this country, and one can go there and see it all clear as print. That is the best reason I can think of for visiting Los Angeles. It is in fact the only reason I can think of. Elsewhere, redeeming details in the way of scenery, architecture and such are apt to sugar-coat and confuse the faults of our American bourgeois civilization. Los Angeles is stench, net. From its stucco bungalows to its stucco boosting, it is self-dedicated to the mean, the reactionary and the phoney. Not that Los Angeles minds. Los Angeles is right well pleased with its smugness and kindred engaging qualities, and it is very largely her message to mankind which the Hollywood studios redistill and proclaim on the miles and miles of Hollywood's celluloid.

SIDNEY HOWARD.

Omit Flowers

"THIS country," said Elmer Durkin, "is within two weeks of going off the G.O.P. standard."

J. T. Riland, editor of The Woppingtonian, took this blow like a man. In a decade of argument with the newsdealer he had done more than his share of the gloating.

"That is quite possible," Riland replied, "but you are counting your chickens before they are hatched."

"Look at who's talking about chickens. I thought that was a ticklish topic in your outfit."

The editor smiled wanly at this sally.

"Hoover never promised a chicken in every pot, Elmer, and he never said prosperity was just around the corner."

"Must have been a couple of other fellows. That shows how the old boy has been put on the spot. He's taking the rap for all the phonies that have been pulled in three years and have they been plenty!"

"The breaks have been against him," the journalist admitted.

"You're telling me? Did you see where wheat took another dive? Somebody doped it that it's the lowest it has been since the days of good Queen Bess. Wouldn't you know it would get that way ten days before the election! Your President has pulled a flock of big figures in this ruckus and I'll say he throws a mean statistic. Most of these go right over the head of a dirt farmer, but when a bim offers him twenty cents a throw for his wheat or eight cents for his corn, he doesn't need any Einstein to show him where he is sunk. Who gets the blame for this burglary? Who, but Hoover?

"There have been a lot of slogans let loose this season, but none of them have wowed the masses. The real motto with vox pop is 'Get hunk with Herby'."

"It's not very intelligent to blame a man for his bad luck."

"Sure I know, J. T., but a guy that never gets a break is not such a help around the place at that. If one of your ink-hounds spent all his time missing street cars, you'd slip him the blue envelope."

"I don't claim Hoover's a superman, but that doesn't mean that Roosevelt would do any better. A change of administration might upset things."

"So I've been hearing. H. H. says the sunshine will be turned off if he's licked. Mills is pretty sure that Franklin D. will go haywire and print wooden money and Beck claims he's practically a Bolshy. The truth is that this frightfulness stuff didn't click. That sketch was good for a lot of shivers in the dear, dead days, but now it's about as terrifying as a Hallowe'en pumpkin.

"I guess Herb did his best with this hammy drama but he had rotten support. Personally I thought Mills was the best bet in his string. He has a nice rush of language, he's a swell viewer-with-alarm and he's not a bird that lets bitter facts cramp him much. But I don't see where Ogden his any drag with the common run of people."

"I don't know—"

"I don't either, J. T.—only he was the big shot of the battle of Maine. All that bought him was a leather medal.

"Pat Hurley was a good deal of a flop. Every time he opened his trap somebody called him a baby-gasser and it took his mind off his work. And poor Charley Curtis—they had to put him away so the Wets wouldn't bite him.

"Make out Bill Borah wouldn't have looked swell out on the western exposure where men are menaces. Al Smith's Newark spiel riled him up some, but he didn't get sore enough to promise to vote for Hoover."

For the first time the editor's gloomy face lightened.

"Which side is Al working for—or is it a family secret?"

"I get you. The old brown derby ain't what she used to be. Al listens like a man who is trying to get square with the bunch that did him dirt in 1928 even if it does help the Old Potato some. He might pry New Jersey and Massachusetts loose from Hoover's mitts, but I doubt if oratory changes many votes in the last quarter. That would go for Hoover and his flock of trained seals, too.

"Jouett Shouse said the other night that the election was in the bag way back before the conventions. That's an awful thought, J. T. Maybe all this applesauce and baloney was wasted. Maybe the two nominees didn't have to do that ducking and squirming marathon."

"There is good reason to believe that sentiment has changed some in the past month," the publisher observed.

"I know, the tide-turners and trend-shifters have been working full time. Maybe the Roosevelt peril has slowed down some since Herb began to sass him back. Your hero might draw thirteen states instead of seven. At that you won't have to spend

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election night making Woppington hideous with your raucous cries. My hunch is that you can curl up in the feathers by ten-thirty. When the G.O.P. is fighting like mad to save Iowa from the wreck, that's enough tip-off for anybody. Take it from one who wouldn't vote for either of these guys on a bet, here's where your little playmate passes out."

"Please omit flowers."

"I wouldn't fool you, J. T. I think the Republicans ought to take it on the chin now and then for the good of their souls, if any. But all I can see in this layout is a new set of faces at the post-office windows. Anything we draw after that will be velvet.

"I've been known to go Democratic as a protest, but it's not safe to do that this season. I couldn't have that bunch on my conscience for the next four years. Me, I'm one of the Thomas boys."

The editor prepared to take his leave.

"Well, the chances look pretty slim, but this idea that Hoover might carry only seven or eight states is absurd."

"Don't tell me an elephant never forgets," Elmer laughed. "The last time a guy named Roosevelt chiseled into one of these things the G.O.P.'s pulled down only two."

FELIX RAY.

Washington Notes

Tail End of the Campaign—Hoping with Hoover —Al Blows off Steam—The Wet Issue— Wall Street Swallows F. D.

IT HAS been interesting these last few weeks to see the Quaker in the White House fighting for his political life with the odds all against him and a disheartened party behind him. Now that the campaign is practically over and there is no longer any prospect of votes being changed by speeches, if any are changed, the fact I pointed out some time ago becomes increasingly plain. There never has been a presidential candidate in the White House who so completely directed and managed his own campaign as Mr. Hoover has done. Perhaps he was forced to because, if he hadn't, there would have been no management at all. The inefficiency of the gentlemen whom he placed in charge of headquarters at New York and Chicago has become generally recognized.

As I write, the trend is still strongly Democratic and those in closest touch with the situation predict that Roosevelt will go to the polls a four-to-one favorite. This will be owing mainly to the Literary Digest and other straw votes, which show such a desertion of Republican voters that from the beginning of the publication of their figures the heart has been taken out of the Republican support and an increasing confidence engendered in the opposition. If these polls turn out to be accurate, in future they undoubtedly will play a much more important part in the politics of the country. For one thing what sense will there be in future campaigns for our great metropolitan journals to send their "trained observers" at great expense around the country to report upon conditions? The answer is, none whatever, and it may be that this campaign will see the last of this long established but not markedly productive phase of journalism.

However, to get back to the campaign proper, it is a mistake to assume that the White House is devoid of hope or bereft of belief that the "great silent vote of the country" has turned toward the President since October 1 and will keep him at the helm of the nation for four more years. All candidates with the odds clearly against them believe in this "great silent vote" right up to the time when the great silent vote has been cast and counted for the other fellow. In this case, aside from the fact that the newspaper and magazine polls do not reflect a last-minute shift of sentiment, there are some other more or less plausible reasons for the hope to which Mr. Hoover's intimates and he himself cling.

It is true, I think, that Mr. Hoover has in his own speeches done himself some good, whereas Governor Roosevelt's speeches have probably failed to help him. Hoover's chances have probably improved to a measurable degree in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan. Moreover, there seems to be general agreement that the Honorable Alfred E. Smith in his Newark speech damaged rather than helped the cause he espouses, despite the subsequent and, from the Democratic standpoint, far more satisfactory speeches he has made. In that first major campaign oration of the one-time "Happy Warrior," the Methodists, Baptists and church people generally were stirred as the Republican strategy had failed to stir them. The embers of the 1928 campaign were raked over and the question of religion injected into the fight. There is no doubt that the Roosevelt management was considerably dismayed by Smith's bitter denunciation of all Drys as hypocrites. The Republicans argue that he greatly helped the swing back to Hoover just at the time and precisely in the way it most needed help.

Four years ago, they contend, Mr. Hoover had the support of practically all the Methodists and Baptists in the country, but the Catholic vote was solidly against him. This time, they say, regardless of Smith's belated efforts to swing back the disaffected part of his following, the fact remains that a great many Catholic Democrats will vote for Hoover, thus expressing their resentment at the treatment accorded Smith at the Chicago convention and their distaste for the influences that brought about Roosevelt's nomination. Under these conditions the Catholic support of Mr. Hoover will be greatly augmented and should make it easy for him to win, provided he can obtain anything like a normal Republican vote. In brief, it is argued that if in the previous campaign the Republican candidate, in spite of Catholic opposition, won, now that he has the Catholic vote at least divided, he should be able to get enough votes to offset the disaffections caused by the three years of depression. It seems to me not only a strained argument at best, but completely unsound when one realizes that at least six million new voters, who have come of age since 1928, will vote this year. However, the church vote in this country is not a thing to be lightly waved aside and there seems slight doubt that Mr. Smith did Mr. Hoover

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some service in stirring the Methodists to militancy in his behalf.

As the fight draws to a close it is interesting to realize that throughout the entire campaign there has not been a single clear-cut issue between the candidates—or the parties. This is true, I think, even on the question of prohibition, about which both party conventions were thrown into a turmoil and which seemed at that time the only real question capable of stirring the people. It has been rather surprising how completely prohibition has taken a secondary place in the campaign. One reason, of course, is that as both parties are divided on the subject, neither wishes to make its fight on prohibition.

The Democrats are willing enough to emphasize it in the big cities but would rather not stress unqualified repeal in the rural sections. The Republicans were even more anxious to keep it out of the campaign and it is a fact that Mr. Hoover has personally insisted upon the members of his Cabinet's confining themselves to the economic issues and treating prohibition as a settled matter which had no place in the campaign. They have not been able to get away with this to the degree they desired and the Democratic advocacy of beer has undoubtedly hurt Hoover in a lot of cities. Nevertheless the fight clearly is not going to be decided on the difference between the Democratic and Republican attitude toward repeal. The real issue, of course, so far as the majority of the voters are concerned, is perfectly simple—either you want to "Hold on to Hoover" or you want a change. All of the arguments, all the oratory, all the publicity, it seems to me, sifts down to that and there is nothing else in the campaign.

It is interesting, I think, to note the change which has come over the so-called financial interests of the East. Last week I mentioned the fact that there had been a certain swing away from Hoover upon the part of at least some of these interests and the gospel was being preached in Wall Street by various of the more influential leaders that inasmuch as Roosevelt's election seems assured, the thing for business to do is to adjust itself to realities and cease conveying the impression that a Democratic victory would be a blow to business.

In the past ten days there has been considerably more pressure applied to turn things in this direction and with no little success. In addition, the argument now being offered by the financial interests, which started out so solidly behind Mr. Hoover on the theory that Roosevelt could not be elected, is that the worst thing that could happen to business would be the reëlection of Hoover. The way they reason is this—at the best Mr. Hoover can only be chosen by a small electoral vote. This means that there would be a Democratic Congress exceedingly bitter toward the executive. It would mean that the West would be aflame with resentment and that the intensity of the feeling would be such that the government could hardly function at all. It would, these leaders argue, make a very much more dangerous social situation in this country should Hoover just "squeeze by."

So far as social unrest is concerned, it will be infinitely better if a Roosevelt landslide really materializes. The next two years, the argument continues, are not going to be good years. We still have a long and a hard row ahead. To have Hoover forced again upon a resentful people by the great industrial states of the East, in the judgment of Wall Street, would be a dangerous thing. There seems a pretty sound base for this idea. Little as these men know about politics and people as a rule, a few of them can think straight.

Washington. T. R. B.

Dinner at Eight

Dinner at Eight, by George Kaufman and Edna Ferber. Forty-sixth Street Theatre, October 21, 1932.

THE PLAY that Miss Ferber and Mr. Kaufman offer at the Forty-sixth Street Theatre is a difficult play to review because of the engagingness, or ambition, of its variety, the smartness and lavishness of its production and the competence of its presentation. "Dinner at Eight" is packed with characters, with stories that are implied or half-told, and with motives weaving in and out. The whole sum of the play is almost empty. The impression is, if somewhat elusively so, specious.

Theatrically this occasion is little more than mildly entertaining. The seriousness in the play does not go far enough to be very binding or in any sense compelling; the edge and irony are not sharp or bold enough to afford much relish; and the lack of a sense of zest and spontaneity among the players themselves increases the effect we get of little gayety, wit, high spirits or verve. I have tried, not for any smartness but in a most humble honesty, to find a comparison that might seem to me to express the total quality of the evening, of play, acting, directing, décor and, by no means least, the audience. With the audience still fresh in my mind, the best I can think of is to say that the appeal of this play is like that of the dinners at the opening of some elaborate New York hotel. There are people to whom these events have a very dressy reality; from this point on those who like may develop the comparison. I gather that "Dinner at Eight" implies a picture of New York; which, given the place, the people and the kind of life, it doubtless does do, more or less. How widely or deeply it does so is quite another matter. But we can at least say that "Dinner at Eight" provides one of those cases of things which, though they prove nothing, are in themselves evidence of the truth of what they claim. I mean to say that such a play is an apt example of what it presents as characteristic of New York. To that extent at least it is expressive, if somewhat unconsciously so perhaps.

We have then a play written by two very successful authors, directed by one of them (Mr. George Kaufman, with his extraordinary theatrical knowledge and skill), designed by Mr. Livingston Platt and fitted out with a company of actors chosen from an unusually ample acquaintance among Broadway theatres. We have had also, doubtless, a great whooping up of the whole event. "Dinner at Eight" looms therefore as one of the most ambitious, heralded and significant spots of the entire season; it is symptomatic, whatever else.

As for the play, it will inevitably be compared to "Grand Hotel," though this need take away none of its originality. Certainly "Grand Hotel" did nothing very new in using the episodic method, and diverse rooms, characters, life

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stories and so on, riding off in every direction, all in its case leading gently to the box office; and certainly it is nothing against a play if somebody has used its stage pattern before. Compared to this new play, "Grand Hotel" was allowed to go further in feeling, sentiment and tangible tragedy; and, partly because of the acting, it achieved more depth in these qualities. But the comparison between the two plays has no real interest. "Dinner at Eight," though it carries on a fair enough stage game, is basically novelistic rather than dramatic. Our impression of it is further complicated by the fact that the play has never decided what its dominant tone shall be. It is at present sometimes melodrama, sometimes social comedy or satire, sometimes farce. It is never—in the writing and otherwise—really brilliant, bold, stinging or pathetic, though it is always adequate—in sum, the service is excellent, the manager sees to everything. The situations, implications of various private dramas, and the play's design, involve a social hostess with a weakening business husband, one ready, in fact, to topple at any moment. Their daughter has fallen in love with a ham star, and been seduced by him without being loved. There is a rival business man with a little wife from the railroad crossings, who in her turn has an affair with a fashionable doctor, whose wife knows his ways and is very patient and wise. There are other people, a wrecked old actress, a maid involved with two of the men servants in the hostess' establishment, and so on. Meanwhile, finally, they are all to appear at the dinner given to the titled English couple. Though secured by cable on shipboard and thus committed to this dinner, the nobility go off fishing in Florida and members of the family at the last moment help to make up the company. And meanwhile, also, we have seen the actor turning the gas on in the hotel room from which he is being ejected. He, too, will not be on hand; the daughter comes in looking for him, goes off to her room on the right and the company toward the dining-room on the left, and the play ends. This ending for "Dinner at Eight" might easily seem to be more inconclusive than it is. A well established tone throughout the play, good acting, good rapport among the characters present on the stage, would have tied the ending into the whole and left the motives, individual dramas, characters and consequences well enough set for us to go on with them in our thoughts. But the acting especially, by the time this concluding scene arrived, had created very little toward its success.

With regard to the acting in "Dinner at Eight," there was never a more subtle acting point involved. We must say in the first place, however, that it is a strong case of type casting, admirably varied and very professional. Indeed the casting is at times done with such precision, parallel and duplication that one might easily think the player's feelings would be hurt; in several instances I should blush to reveal to the player how easily nature has surpassed art. And so there are many moments when the playing goes over the footlights merely by the player chosen for the part. On the other hand very often, of course, everything depends on the acting pure and simple. None of this, however, is to the point, which is to say that in few companies have I ever seen a better general level of performing than in "Dinner at Eight." As performing it is excellent. As acting it amounts to very little. Mr. George Kaufman in his directing has contrived with every person on the stage the right thing to do, everything goes most competently, at every turn; but this acting has very little ring to it.

Miss Constance Collier, using her most Homeric and reliable comedy method, seized, as is usual with this actress, upon the entire stage. For once, if ever, she was justified in her obliterations. If her scenes were each a separate number almost, they were at least a relief and, dramatically, had a style and their own kind of luster. Miss Judith Wood, as the young and tartish wife, had a good moment in the quarrel scene with her rich business husband, who was played with the same convincingness that Mr. Paul Harvey always shows in doing the same thing in every role he plays. Miss Ann Andrews as the society hostess, in her greetings and telephonings especially, gave a fair impersonation of Miss Ruth Draper's impersonation of such a personage. In general the playing was without give and take in any real sense, no pressure outward from the individual actors, no genuine rapport among them, no flying, no distinction. The scene where the young girl in love with the broken-down actor comes desperately to him in his hotel room was played with no pathos at all, no implication of romantic, psychological or spiritual meaning—you can take your choice as to which might have been evident, though the truth would lie in them all and much more—most of it was only stage business. Not that this playing in "Dinner at Eight" was mechanical; it was only empty. It has the plain sincerity of avoiding hokum for the most part; though this avoidance is not a virtue in itself: without inspiration it is itself only a less worn-out kind of hokum. The scene of the actor's gas-works suicide has no cumulation in motives and suspense but remains merely a dull bit, its demands on the actor as unpaid as the hotel bill. Either good old-fashioned honest theatre roaring and suffering and high-lighting or else an exact and deeply felt realism might save it; as the scene goes it is only an underlined progress in tosh. Curiously competent and neither important nor, as acting, very interesting, is this playing in "Dinner at Eight," despite the particulars and stage knowledge that Mr. Kaufman gave to the directing. The proverb reverses and we may say that you can make a horse drink but cannot lead him to water, if there is any water. This does not let the director out, however, for it is his place to see what the acting finally amounts to, just as in "Dinner at Eight" it was his business to achieve some agreement in tone for the whole sum of the acting. As the acting in "Dinner at Eight" now goes, it runs from farce to social satire to tragedy, without the basic element that would take this plausible flesh, fish and fowl and make it all of a piece.

The settings and gownings of "Dinner at Eight" are very generous and handsome, as the numerous scenes follow one after another. Mr. Livingston Platt has done some of his most successful designs in several seasons. The blonde's room, in the modernistic manner, comes off best, but the drawing-room for the dinner guests is effective enough. It should be observed, nevertheless, of some of the scenes, the hotel room, for example, or the yellow kitchen, that they are done not *con amore* or with such loving application but with quite as much prose realism as ever was shown by Mr. Belasco, whose works we have been for some time

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taught to despise, have we not? For my part I do not mind at all if anybody wants to bother with bringing in these equipments; I have seen by now far more art-drops, simply indicative painted shifts and abstract designs than I have real kitchens. There is, in fact, a certain genuine theatricality in making things so real that we know they are false. STARK YOUNG.

Not on the Ticker Tape

WITH THE passing of the election, we shall again be able to face economic problems in a more realistic spirit. Politicians have sought to give economics a dogmatism which its own professors know is unjustified. This point is illustrated by the spirit in which partisans discussed Mr. Hoover's assertion that the country had been within two weeks of going off the gold standard. Senator Glass and the rest of the opposition replied that the assertion was absurd and that the country at no time was in such danger. As a matter of fact, economics is an inexact science, and it is impossible to formulate within minutes how near we were to abandoning the gold standard.

President Hoover and his supporters have likewise made much of the fact that Europe was responsible for the secondary depression in 1931. They didn't bother to mention that the blow-ups of important European central banks in 1931 were the result of a chain of events starting as far back as 1928, when American investors suddenly stopped exporting capital on a huge scale. The last phases of the bull speculation in stocks in New York, culminating in October, 1929, led to such high interest rates for borrowed funds that foreign governments and corporations could no longer catch buyers with the bait of higher interest rates. All through 1929 the creditor, engaged in speculation at home, was starving the rest of the world of credit. Furthermore, the prevalence in 1929 of 9-percent time-money rates in New York for brokers' loans not only checked the export of capital, which gravitated toward the stock market, but also served as a magnet which drew short-term funds to New York from European and other foreign-money capitals.

After the panic, Europe, particularly Germany, sought to bridge the gap with short-term loans from American banks. When the creditor became alarmed about the safety of such loans in 1931, banks abroad began to pop. Of course, the European crises reacted on the American financial fabric, but American ballyhoo and speculative excesses helped to upset the equilibrium abroad, especially in countries which had become permanent boarders at the table of American capital.

After underwriting billions of dollars' worth of loans which are in default or near default, the investment bankers of the country recently held a convention at White Sulphur Springs to decide what had happened. They recognized certain surface defects in their methods, such as excessive competition to get foreign loans, high-pressure selling of bonds and the secrecy practised by holding companies. But these excrescences are not the fundamental cause of the trouble. Issues turned sour in wholesale fashion because the originating bankers took for granted greater economic stability than we have experienced in the last three years. The collapse of the price level and the rise in the real value of gold—and of all contracts made in gold—was the moving force behind the widespread decline of investment values. If bankers are to be candid in the future, all new security issues will be described as risks, depending on future conditions, at least until rational means for stabilizing economic society have been adopted. Instead of turning their attention to proposals for economic planning and stabilization, the bankers stuck their heads in the ground as ostriches are (incorrectly) supposed to do, and talked strictly of trade problems. As Walter Lippmann once remarked, the paradox of democracy lies in the fact that the people are not interested in their own interests.

Shed a tear for the bankers. Investment bankers have in reality been among the unemployed this year. There was already an excess of capital equipment for the existing gross volume of business. Accordingly, those with capital saw no opportunity for its profitable employment in business expansion.

Incidentally, the disappointing statistics of new issues have proved the major contention of those advocating large-scale governmental borrowing for public-works projects. They foresaw a continued capital blockade, and recognized that only the government, which is not actuated by the profit motive, could employ capital under existing depression conditions.

Missing the main point, the administration pussyfooted, insisting that large governmental loans would divert capital which might otherwise flow into private industry. Thus the government left the field for capital partly open for private industry, but private industry took virtually none. The weaker sisters who needed help, like some of the railroads, had to rely on superior government credit and borrow from the R. F. C.

With its present capitalization, based on the boom values of 1928-29, business cannot proceed indefinitely at the current slow pace. I have discussed this point recently with a number of hard-headed executives, who believe that business has about reached the limit of living on its fat. It has already exhausted the possibility of adjusting itself to diminished gross income through eliminating personnel, through cutting out dividends and through slashing wages. It is now getting to the point where unless there is improvement, weaker companies will begin to fall behind on interest payments and then default on principal. One outstanding industrial leader told me the other day that the 8-percent pickup since the summer low point represents replacement in lines where subnormal consumption had outstripped production. With such replacement accomplished, he sees no chance for continued improvement until farm purchasing power is increased and until part of the unemployed have been reabsorbed into industry.

Marketwise, the passing of the election will clear the air. The mere supplanting of uncertainty with certainty may, in the opinion of brokers, be the basis for a rally, but it is my opinion that large-scale investment in equities will not take place until capitalists are convinced that corporate earnings are improving. L. M. N.

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CORRESPONDENCE

A Pot without a Kettle?

SIR: I think you are generalizing on too few data in your editorial "Petting and Kettling" in the October 5 issue. To pick out a single Socialist who is misinformed on one occasion about the Communists and accuse all Socialist leaders of wasting their energies in "bad tempered and absurd squabbles" is to betray a widespread ignorance of intentions and actions on the part of both Socialists and Communists.

So far as I can check up, no member of the Socialist party's national executive committee of eleven has indulged in any such squabbles. On the contrary, the national campaign committee, at its first meeting after the Milwaukee convention, issued instructions to all party workers, writers and editors that the Communists should not be attacked and that no controversy should be entered into with the Communists unless in answer to an attack from them.

In contrast to this, the Communist national convention issued orders that Socialist meetings should be broken up wherever possible. And, of course, one only has to read Communist newspapers and leaflets and listen to Communist speeches to know that the Socialist party is their chief object of attack. While we appreciate the implied compliment, it would suit us much better to try to be the "one of the radical parties to stick to the main job" rather than to have to spend a great deal of time and energy warding off unwarranted attacks from the rear.

CLARENCE SENIOR,
Chicago, Ill. Campaign Director, Socialist Party.

The Navy Goes Historical

SIR: Your readers may be interested in the enclosed open letter to President Hoover.

ALFRED LIEF.
New York City.

[ENCLOSURE]

Honorable Herbert C. Hoover,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

As commander-in-chief of the navy you have authority over the Navy Department. As President you have the duty to restrain it from unwarranted conduct.

As a private citizen I feel bound to protest to you against a press release sent out by the Navy Department (dated September 11, 1932).

In that release the Department pointed out that Navy Day (October 27) would be observed with the assistance of the National Bicentennial Commission; that President Washington's naval program would be emphasized. The Department declared that Washington stood in the predicament of urging neutrality in the aftermath of the French Revolution, only to meet "difficulty in preserving without any American navy the neutrality which he sponsored."

This is a shocking strategem, calculated to convince the American people that if we are to maintain neutrality we must have a big navy.

Apart from the untruth of the historical reference, the Navy Department has no right to issue a statement intended to influence government policy. . . .

On the question of neutrality in 1793 I have appealed to eminent historians. One of the leading specialists in the country who holds a chair of American history in a prominent university, writes me that he finds "nothing in Washington's papers to indicate that he felt embarrassment in urging neutrality after the French Revolution on account of the difficulty which such neutrality would meet without the building of a large American navy." This professor says further, "I agree with you thoroughly in your objection to the propaganda in the Navy Department in connection with the observance of Navy Day in the Washington Bicentennial."

Another eminent historian, Professor S. E. Morison of Harvard University, author of "Oxford History of the United States," permits me to quote him as follows:

> Although the Navy Department is entitled to its interpretation, my own interpretation of Washington's neutrality is quite different. I found sufficient evidence in the French Archives, investigating them some years ago for light on this very point, to reach the conclusion that if the United States had had a navy in 1793, we would have been called upon to fulfill our obligations under the treaty with France. Since we had no navy, the French government felt that we would be more useful as a neutral than as an ally, and instructed their Minister Genet accordingly.

These quotations surely are a sufficient answer to the navy's propaganda. One historian examined Washington's papers. The other examined the French Archives. Can you support the navy's press agents?

Respectfully yours,
ALFRED LIEF.

Shaw's Strictures on the Jews

SIR: A lofty silence would doubtless have been the severest punishment the Jewish people could have inflicted on George Bernard Shaw for his recent "Shofar Blast." As one of the rabbis whose "scuttering" Shaw has caused, permit me to say that at least three major points are at issue in the matter.

The first is the lack of good taste which prompted an allegedly Jewish periodical to solicit a New Year greeting from a man whose previous utterances on Jews made it certain he would give vent to offensive and insulting remarks. . . . The second point at stake is the manner and content of Mr. Shaw's statement. His language was highly obnoxious, not only in its phrases concerning the historic enterprise of the Jewish people in rebuilding Palestine, but also in its supercilious advice to Jews elsewhere to disappear. . . . The third point is the unfortunate impression which your editorial [issue of October 12] conveys that The New Republic is allowing itself to be tarred with the brush which Mr. Shaw wields. You remark that whether Jewish leaders like it or not, Jews will disappear in America and everywhere else "when the boundaries of prejudice are at last broken down." The record of nearly 150 years of Jewish emancipation speaks to the contrary. A morbid Jewish self-consciousness may be accentuated by persecution, but it is nothing short of a myth to believe that Jewish survival depends upon anti-Semitism. . . .

Pianissimo tactics in dealing with Hitler and Shaw may appeal to many Gentiles and some Jews, but others of us believe that when laborious efforts at humor pass the boundaries of good manners and good sense and become an encouragement to the hateful propaganda of prejudice, it is necessary to speak out forthrightly even at the risk of The New Republic's criticism. Perhaps the day may come when liberal Gentile periodicals will not wish Jews to serve as doormats for the Shaws and their kind.

New York City. (RABBI) LOUIS I. NEWMAN.

Jobs for College Men

SIR: The Association of Unemployed Alumni was not brought into being by professional revolutionaries. Most of us are new at the game of political organization and maneuvering, but we are taking it up with vehemence because the doldrums of unemployment, with no prospect of external aid, have become intolerable.

We are probably the most pitiful group of workers in this crisis. Lawyers, engineers, doctors, teachers, highly trained business men—unemployment has caught us all unorganized and with no technique for combating the organized agencies of retrenchment. Except for a protest from the teachers' group, the cuts in hospital

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staffs, the abandonment of public projects and, indeed, even of planning for public projects, have been met with nothing more emphatic than individual mutterings from the persons directly affected. . . .

No one yet knows exactly how many unemployed college alumni there are in New York City. But engineering societies here have had on their unemployed rolls at least 20,000. Considering, moreover, the number of professions at least equally hard-hit, one hardly needs to wait for detailed statistics in order to realize the predicament of an alarming number of college graduates. . . .

Well, what can the A. U. C. A. do? There are fundamental assumptions underlying our program: one is that if jobs are going to be created, the government must create them; the second is that the government will not do so unless the groups directly involved exert mass pressure; the third, that although unemployment among educated people is a manifestation of the same social maladjustment as unemployment among the unskilled, we, as a group, have special needs, and that our agitation will be most effective if we focus it upon those needs.

The program which each of our members accepts is as follows:

1. Unemployment insurance with provisions to include those who have never worked since leaving college.
2. Opposition to retrenchment at the expense of professional workers in schools, hospitals and other public institutions.
3. Free state employment agencies.
4. Special appropriations to provide loan funds, to be made by the state, to permit undergraduates and alumni to complete their education or to take advanced work.
5. Solidarity with some groups of unemployed workers.

Already we have representatives from over fifteen colleges in our group: Columbia, Hunter, Harvard, M. I. T., Fordham Law School, Elmira, Cornell, C. C. N. Y., Columbia Dental School. Among the professions represented are teachers, chemists, engineers, business men, lawyers, one who signed himself a historian, another who calls himself a music researcher, and several newspaper men. We have had a difficult job enrolling lawyers and doctors. These people not only are afraid of being blacklisted, but seem too snooty ever to admit that they are unemployed. They seem to think that a shingle on their door post is a substitute for clients and patients. . . .

Every time we have a meeting and a new member arises to tell his tale of woe and ends by quietly asserting his hatred of a system which won't give him a chance, all of us realize that there are explosive potentialities in the A. U. C. A. At present we confine ourselves to the statement that lacking solidarity we have been unable to raise even the feeble protests of the industrial worker. Organization, the key to effectiveness in the labor movement, is now our only measure of self-defense.

We invite all college alumni to join. Address, 112 East Nineteenth Street, New York City.

JOSEPH P. LASH.

New York City.

Hurley and the Bonuseers

SIR: Your readers will, I think, be interested in the enclosed letter from Herbert S. Ward, a well known Washington attorney, to the Honorable Patrick J. Hurley, Secretary of War.

JUDSON KING.

Washington, D. C.

[ENCLOSURE]

Honorable Patrick J. Hurley,
Secretary of War,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

Some time ago I was surprised by General McArthur's published statements that the Bonus Expeditionary Force, under command of Walter W. Waters, was a national menace; that it was composed of men a majority of whom were not veterans, but were in fact Communists; that the Hoover declaration of war averted a national catastrophe, and that Camp Marks was fired by the Bonus Expeditionary Force and not by the soldiers under his command.

Later, I was staggered to see that you had also repeated these statements; and now that Assistant Secretary Davison has had the temerity to use them in his campaign, in an attempt to vilify the Bonus Expeditionary Force, I feel fully justified in recalling to you the following from our interview of Tuesday, July 26, preceding the battle of Pennsylvania Avenue, in order that you may, for the benefit of all concerned, square these facts with the published statements emanating from your Department.

You will recall, Mr. Secretary, that this interview took place in your office and extended over a period of more than three hours; that there were present yourself, Major General Douglas McArthur, B.E.F. Commander Walter W. Waters, Captain Doak E. Carter, Lieutenant Johnston and myself; that during this interview the Pace Communist group of about two hundred men was constantly referred to as entirely separate from the B.E.F.—that Commander Waters stated he would evacuate the three congested areas in Washington as soon as he could find shelter for some 250 women and children; that Waters had advised all veterans with homes to return to them and that the men still in Washington had no homes, except the temporary quarters which they occupied, many with their families and all their worldly goods; that Waters was at that time working on a Florida colonization scheme and had other projects for dispersing these men into productive industry; that temporary shelters were planned at Camp Bartlett, on the extreme outskirts of the District of Columbia, which would clear the congested area within a week; and lastly, that Captain Carter tendered to you the loyal support and coöperation of every man in the B.E.F. to carry out any order or wish which you might, officially or otherwise, express.

I do not forget, Mr. Secretary, that you called General Frank T. Hines of the Veterans' Administration and urged him to allow these women and children to be moved to Fort Hunt for a few days. Also, that you asked General McArthur if he could supply the necessary tentage for a temporary period. I admired and commended this coöperative spirit on your part. I clearly recall, however, your reply to Captain Carter's tender of the loyal coöperation of the B.E.F. to the effect that there was no condition which would lead you to call upon the B.E.F., or any of its members for any service, as well as Captain Carter's rejoinder that you did not feel that way about it in 1917. I also clearly recall your observation that the B.E.F. had been a problem to the administration, because these men had been absolutely law abiding and orderly; that had they violated the law, or been disorderly, they could have been evicted from the District of Columbia by the civil or military authorities and that the President of the United States, by a scratch of his pen, could declare martial law and use the entire military forces of the United States for that purpose.

Now, if I have erred in any point, please correct me. If I have not, please square your Department's broadcast with these facts and explain how the moving-picture industry obtained reels of men in uniform setting fire to the B.E.F. shacks at Camp Marks, occupied by the veterans and their families, between 10:00 and 11:00 Thursday night, July 28. . . .

HERBERT S. WARD.

Washington, D. C.

Rebelart

SIR: Rebel Arts, an organization of artists who contribute to the Socialist movement, announces publication of a monthly magazine to be known as Rebelart.

The purpose of Rebelart is to bring to the workers and intellectuals of America the most realistic of radical discussion on the class struggle in its current and historic phases. Artists and writers of a revolutionary viewpoint will be assured entire freedom from political domination in their treatment of social and revolutionary problems.

Graphic art, essays, short stories, poems and plays may be sent in my care, Room 1101, 112 East Nineteenth Street, New York City.

New York City. F. H. LOWENSTEIN

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The Centenary of Scott

Sir Walter Scott, by John Buchan. New York: Coward-McCann. 384 pages. $3.75.

The Letters of Sir Walter Scott: 1787-1807, edited by H. J. C. Grierson. Centenary Edition. London: Constable and Company, Ltd. 626 pages. 18 shillings.

The Heart of Scott's Poetry, selected by John Haynes Holmes. New York: Oxford University Press. 275 pages. $2.50.

The Waverley Pageant, edited by Hugh Walpole. New York: Harper and Brothers. 702 pages. $4.

SIR WALTER SCOTT shares with Doctor Johnson the distinction of being both a great writer and the subject of a great biography. When Lockhart undertook the life of his father-in-law, he had as his model Boswell's "Life of Johnson" and, if he lacked Boswell's unique power of submitting himself as a foil to his master's personality, he none the less portrayed his hero as a real person who lives for generations to come in the pages of the second great English biography. Indeed, so startling was Lockhart's realism in contrast to the mortuary style of biographical monuments then in vogue that Carlyle felt obliged to defend him against the charge of betraying the memory of the man who had trusted him. Today it is clear that Scott, like Johnson, owes much of his fame to the character preserved for us by the piety of his biographer. "He [Scott] has left us," says Mr. Buchan, "not only the products of his fancy but almost his bodily presence, a personality which to his lovers is as real as if in the flesh he still moved among us. Alone of all the great imaginative creators he draws us to an affectionate intimacy."

Lockhart's work, however, a half-century later than Boswell's, must be judged by more rigid standards. In the introduction to the first volume of his exhaustive collection of Scott's letters, Professor Grierson points out how flagrantly Lockhart "manipulated" his documents by correction, omission and combination, in the interest of artistic portraiture but to the scandal of scientific scholarship. It may be added that Professor Grierson's own editorial work is impeccable. In the present volume of 200 letters, 98 are published for the first time. He includes in an appendix a series of letters from Scott to the Ballantynes between 1807 and 1818, full of evidence of the wearing anxiety to which Scott was subjected in his connection with the printing and publishing firms of the two brothers. In regard to the chief matter of controversy in Lockhart's work, his attack on Scott's associates in his business career and bankruptcy, Professor Grierson has given for the first time a clear account of the whole complicated commercial relations which arose out of Scott's partnership with Ballantyne formed in 1805, supported by an examination of all the records extant, by Mr. James Glen. There remains no question that Lockhart's zeal led him to do great injustice to James Ballantyne and to Constable.

Mr. Buchan, who speaks modestly of his work as "the recutting of some of the lines of Lockhart's imperishable memorial," does not enter deeply into the Ballantyne controversy. He cannot, however, ignore Scott's business ventures, which were so interwoven with his literary career. Scott's life was a paradoxical union of past and present. His fanatical love of the past took the material form of recreating the habit of life of a laird of the Border. It furnished him with the substance and inspiration for the poems and novels which he wrote to sustain that recreation, but as the profits of authorship were insufficient and accrued too slowly for the purpose, he became a trader and speculator in literary goods. Thus Scott played two roles, the incompatibility of which he concealed even from himself by the obscurity with which he surrounded both. The partnership with Ballantyne was a secret: the authorship of "Waverley" was a mystery. As for the former, Mr. Buchan thinks Scott was obliged to reveal a business connection no more than an ownership of shares in a stock company. To this Mr. Grierson dryly replied: "If we hold brewery or oil shares we do not, as a rule, take active steps to promote the sale of beer and petrol among our friends." The Ballantyne connection was the germ of the larger business dealings between Scott and Constable, in which, with the empire of British letters at stake, each gambled upon the success of the other. The burden of the collapse was borne by Scott single-handed to a triumph cut short by his death. It cannot be doubted that the pursuit and failure of Scott's ideal gave to his life its searching test, and to the record of that life the emphasis which makes it a great subject for biography. Here, as in Greek drama, we have the "tragic error" and its nemesis.

Mr. Buchan weaves into his record of events a just valuation of Scott's work as it stands a century after his death. He recognizes the two obviously contrasting elements, the truth of the realist who knew and loved the Scottish land and its people, and the patent falseness of the romancer who peopled his stage with elegant persons who go through their motions and mouth their lines in a setting of meretricious grandeur. The opposition is not between realism and romance. Scott's true romance arises out of his realism, in those moments when his uncouth, homely, thwarted, grotesque, fantastic but incontestably real Scottish men and women fall into their native humor of attitude and speech, or soar with splendor of conduct which gives them imperishable distinction—Meg Merrilies when she curses Ellangowan, or Evan Dhu Maccombich when he offers his life for Vich Ian Vohr. The contrast is rather between the genuine and the artificial, the native and the conventional. It was part of Scott's unconsciousness as an artist that he was not aware of this difference. Here again we find the "tragic error." It was necessary to Scott's business as purveyor of literary goods that he should send out his novels to meet the fashion. He took a certain pride in giving the public what it wanted. Thus the exigencies of business betrayed him, without a suspicion on his part of the chasm between the true and false which today seems so appalling.

Mr. David Cecil in The Atlantic Monthly finds the clue to the riddle of Scott's lost reputation in his ignorance of the requirement of the novel that the emphasis of form shall coincide with that of matter, that the author's best characters and episodes shall be the most important in the book. "Scott," Mr. Cecil complains, "did not conceive a novel as a whole at all." This is a modern way of putting the matter, and it reflects a stricture upon Scott which he does not deserve. It is true Scott did not conceive a novel as a whole, but nobody else did at that time except Jane Austen. The picaresque, episodic method of accumulating a novel still prevailed. Scott, in fact, shows an advance in technique in imposing a certain formal structure upon the mass of his material, though the device often resembles a Palladian façade masking a Gothic pile. It cannot be doubted that Scott took for his model in form the plays of Shakespeare, which were his favorite reading. Like Shakespeare he combined a main plot with a subplot introducing the common humor and pathos of life. The difference is that Scott could not keep the due proportion

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between them. Like Shakespeare he employed the material and literary values of his age, but the age had lost faith in the things which gave it pleasure, and Scott was of his age. Only in his subplots was he himself, and in them he anticipated the richness and abundance, the humanity, of Victorian fiction.

The antinomy between the native and the conventional which marks Scott's novels is found in his poetry. His best training as poet was his collection of the indigenous ballad verse of the countryside for "The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." Scottish landscape, the deeds of Scottish men and the genius of native song were the true springs of Scott's poetry, which in its exact description of nature, energetic narrative and essential lyric quality has a power not to be denied. Mr. Holmes holds that Scott's reputation, like Wordsworth's, has suffered from the bulk of his work, its mingling of noble metal and base. With taste and enthusiasm he has garnered the best of Scott's poetry, especially the lyrics which are scattered through the narrative verse and prose. These lyrics, Mr. Holmes points out, are not mere interludes but, like the songs in Shakespeare's plays, serve to condense as it were the emotion which belongs to the moment. Scott's songs are meant to be sung; they cry out for music, and fortunately they have often found a fulfilment so perfect as to seem inevitable. Who can think over "The Bonnets of Bonnie Dundee" or "A Health to King Charles" without singing the lines? Mr. Holmes rejects Principal Shairp's famous comparison of Scott to Homer and points out the truer one, emphasized by his naïve and spontaneous lyric quality, to the Elizabethans.

The plan which is successful in the case of Scott's poetry fails lamentably with the novels. Mr. Walpole remarks in his introduction that Scott's greatest power lay in the creation of character; and again, that "the test of a character in any novel is that it should have existed before the book that reveals it to us began and should continue after the book is closed." Obviously this power cannot be realized, or the test applied, when the character is torn from its roots in a peopled world. There are scenes in Scott's novels which in sheer drama can stand alone, such as the meeting in the cave between Morton and Balfour of Burley in "Old Mortality." This Mr. Walpole has unaccountably omitted, and many of those which he has included, out of their context, lose color and meaning. "The Waverley Pageant" is a work of piety, and one of supererogation. ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

Vatican Express

The Discovery of Europe, by Paul Cohen-Portheim. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 296 pages. $3.

H. G. WELLS' utopian fantasy, the United States of Europe, was a flat failure; Coudenhove's Pan-Europa movement, popular among school teachers, was making headway in the Hansa ports until a year ago, but has since turned out to be another pipe-dream. Cohen-Portheim is not naïve enough to suggest that a European federation can make any progress at present, but he does believe he has a cure for the spiritual and economic arthritis that has crippled the Continent and promises—if treatment is not administered soon—to destroy it.

Like most cures, this one is based on the principle that the patient does the work and the doctor collects the fees. If one studies Cohen-Portheim's prescription carefully, one finds it not entirely free from emotional and factual hocus-pocus. Those readers who are familiar with the author's earlier works, "Der Geist Frankreichs" and "Asien als Erzieher," or the two volumes which appeared in this country, "England the Unknown Isle" and "Time Stood Still," will know what to expect of "The Discovery of Europe." Cohen-Portheim showed himself then, as he does now, to be a zealous champion of the European spirit as opposed to the "degrading" machine-quantity ideal set by America and followed by Soviet Russia. The Vatican will embrace him for contending that the European spirit, as yet undefined, is synonymous with the spirit of the Roman Catholic Church. For it is the Church of Rome, we are reminded, that unified Europe and "this unity was destroyed by the Reformation, Puritanism, commerce, industry, the machine." In another place Cohen-Portheim says that the "Catholic Church was, I think, bad when all-powerful; at present I think its supernational influence one of the hopes for a European future."

Exactly what he means by European culture, or the European spirit, is later suggested by a bevy of abstract definitions which give the illusion of being crystal clear when read but actually remain as vague on the last page as they were on the first. "Tolerance," says Cohen-Portheim, "is the truly European state of mind and compromise its method." The English are cited as the "masters of compromise," a description which the MacDonald government seems to justify. In another instance the essence of Europeanism is found to be the "free and untrammeled development of the human personality."

Cohen-Portheim insists that Europe will discover the solution of its problems when, by rediscovering itself, the European spirit is rehabilitated. He reviews the events leading to the formation of an overindustrialized, nationalistic Europe, and the "grab-bag" of vested interests that set the world shaking. With a shrewd display of facts he shows that the dissolution of the European spirit had set in before the War in the eighties with the scientific era of Darwin and that "the War itself was more its result than its cause." When the old creed of scientific materialism crumbled, he contends, there was no new creed to take its place. His guess is as good as any.

His estimate of America should make our ears ring; although remarkably sound, it is closely patterned after the popular European conception of the United States as a cross between a Klondike mining camp and Coney Island. The regimentation of the human personality in America (as in Russia and Italy) Cohen-Portheim finds particularly repulsive, undignified and un-European. He will have none of it, no matter how appetizingly it is served up to the masses (what about Catholic indoctrination, Herr Cohen-Portheim?). If, as our author later argues, the "masses are incapable of thought everywhere," what difference does it make whether they doff their hats to the Nazi Swastika, the tomb of Lenin or the American flag?

We are tempted to believe that Cohen-Portheim's prophecies are largely rationalizations of his nostalgia for the Europe of his youth: the Europe he describes so delightfully in the second half of his book. If it requires logic to convince us that Vienna's eclipse is only temporary, then there is no sophistry he will not resort to. Paris is still the "only city of great conceptions. . . . Italy alone has more beauty than all countries outside Europe combined." The traits of each people are pungently epitomized in a style that frequently strikes a vein of profound observation. The fact that the book holds together in spite of its lapses in logic and tiresome repetitions is due primarily to the passionate sincerity with which these pages were written. E. M. BENSON.

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Diagnosis and Forecast

The Gold Standard and Its Future, by T. E. Gregory. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 115 pages. $1.50.

The Financial Aftermath of the War, by Sir Josiah Stamp. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 149 pages. $1.75.

The World's Economic Crisis and the Way of Escape, by Sir Arthur Salter, Sir Josiah Stamp, J. Maynard Keynes, Sir Basil Blackett, Henry Clay and Sir W. H. Beveridge. New York: The Century Company. 185 pages. $1.75.

Gold and Monetary Stabilization (Lectures on the Harris Foundation, 1932), edited by Quincy Wright. The University of Chicago Press. 174 pages. $2.

The Crisis in the World's Monetary System, by Gustav Cassel. New York: Oxford University Press. 98 pages. $1.25.

ALTHOUGH the full implications of alternative policies of currency, credit, public finance and trade are by no means adequately understood, no one can deny the prevailing deep and universal interest in these policies. The quick succession of events in little more than a decade —the wholesale return of countries to the gold standard after 1920, the feverish prosperity of the period, the unexpected and devastating collapse of business nearly everywhere in 1930 and, finally, the abandonment of the gold standard by even England in 1931—has shaken the faith of increasing numbers in the validity of established institutions and has encouraged the search for new solutions. In such a setting even the citizens of the United States, the nation endowed with the richest of natural resources, the highest of living standards and an almost unparalleled state of economic self-sufficiency, were within the past month again thrown into panic by a run on their dollar started in a presidential campaign speech; and it is still not uncommon to hear the abandonment of the gold standard in this country seriously advocated.

If anyone looks to these pamphlets and lectures by foreign and American economists for a pat and automatic formula of economic recovery, he will be doomed to disappointment. After three years of experience with the depression, the dominant opinion of professional economists seeems to have undergone little change. Allowing for local variations in the problem which, for example, may distinguish the past and future course of business in England from that in the United States, the roots of the depression are again found in the world maladjustments originating in the last war and peace and in the persistence of mistaken and inflexible policies since then. Patient reading of Professor Gregory's expert and authoritative discussion of the gold standard should make it difficult for either reformers or revolutionaries to seek the cure for present ills in managed currencies or, for that matter, in exclusive preoccupation with credit and monetary policies. Sir Josiah Stamp's account of the fiscal history of England after the War should, likewise, reveal the extent to which post-war governments have constantly pursued the policy of liberal spending and have thereby created formidable, if not insuperable, obstacles to recovery.

Where the economists diverge sharply in doctrine and, hence, in program, they take positions already familiar to students of their earlier writings. Among the many themes elaborated by Mr. J. M. Keynes in his Halley Stewart lecture he repeats his pleas for generous spending. "I predict," he says, "with an assured confidence that the only way out is for us to discover some object which is admitted even by the deadheads to be a legitimate excuse for largely increasing the expenditure of someone on something." Aiming at the same target with, I should judge, a similar weapon, Professor Cassel closes his Rhodes Memorial Lectures with the advice that "the best thing that the gold-standard countries could do for a rapid economic recovery would be immediately to start an inflation of their currencies." The most effective statement of the orthodox position, aside from Gregory's analysis of the gold standard, is to be found in a lecture by Henry Clay. Here, with the greatest economy of space and argument, this economist paints a picture of the post-war economic problems of England which, because of its insight, accuracy and sound judgment, may be recommended as a salutary antidote to the pamphlets and tomes aimed lightly at the reorganization of English and other economic life.

Stripped of their technicalities and theorizing, this latest crop of depression studies proves once more that no modern economic system, capitalist, communist, syndicalist or fascist, can expose itself to the ravages of large-scale war and the inevitable follies of post-war economic policy and avoid paying the huge costs of both through prolonged periods of disintegration and painful adjustment. In the face of the powerful world economic and political forces which are directing the course of events in this generation, it is well to question the potency of proposals which may do no more than delay necessary adjustments and thereby intensify the tragedy of depression. LEO WOLMAN.

Farewell to Irony

Summer Is Ended, by John Herrmann. New York: Covici-Friede. $2.

FOLLOWING so close upon the publication of his superb "The Big Short Trip," to which Scribner's Magazine awarded half of the first prize in its recent short-novel contest, John Herrmann's "Summer Is Ended" is an anti-climax. It should have been published—and probably was written—before "The Big Short Trip." It lacks the maturity of the Scribner novel, lacks that "certain magnitude" which Aristotle identified with the nature of tragedy and which Mr. Herrmann so eloquently suggested in the last itinerary of Sam MacHenry, the jewelry salesman, in whose dying we realized the death of an entire class.

"The Big Short Trip" is, indeed, a good critical yardstick to apply to "Summer Is Ended." It shows, and shows up, the limitations of the present book and reveals how the objectivism which Mr. Herrmann's fiction ordinarily shares with that of Robert MacAlmon and William Carlos Williams is raised to a vastly higher level by being informed with a significant social vision. The same esthetic integrity went into the making of both novels, the same homely down-to-earth meticulously flatfooted style, the same determination to be American and nothing else but. The difference is one of orientation; it proves how much more effectively the writer can exploit his material when he understands its true class nature.

"Summer Is Ended" tells the story of a girl and a boy from Michigan. "Charlotte Dale had felt from her high-school days that what she wanted most in life was a home and children, quite a few children, and for their father she wanted Carl Yoeman." When finally they agree to marry, after Charlotte has triumphed over Carl's inconstancy and weakness and indifference, even following him to Paris to get him, she finds that owing to a previous, largely uncon-

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scious and utterly meaningless surrender to another in despair of ever winning Carl, she is no longer able to have children. The book ends on this ironic note, which is reënforced when, turning back to page one, we read: "If Charlotte had told him when they decided to get married that according to the doctor she probably would never have any children, he wouldn't have cared; he might have felt slightly relieved about it."

This mood of romantic irony—even more than its drunken parties, its yearners for the artistic life, its newspaper people who want to be real authors and its handspring from the Middle West to the Left Bank—is what definitely places Mr. Herrmann's novel in the American literature of the nineteen-twenties. "Summer Is Ended" belongs with Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants," although it lacks those agonizing overtones which give the Hemingway story some degree of universality. In short, it dates. Its young people would not be confronted with the same problems today—witness Sam MacHenry's son Gerald—or, if they were, they would meet them in a different fashion. Moreover, we are no longer content to see ourselves pickled in irony and labeled "human nature." Summer is ended for that sort of thing.

EDWIN SEAVER.

Words and Music

George Gershwin's Song Book, illustrated by Constantin Aladjálov. New York: Simon and Schuster. 178 pages. $5.

THIS COLLECTION of eighteen songs is excellent testimony to the degree of sophistication which American popular music has been acquiring over the last twenty years. One may fairly say that the process began with the appearance of Jerome Kern's interpolation, "Honeymoon Lane," in the 1913 production, "The Sunshine Girl." The next year, when the same writer's "They Didn't Believe Me" became the hit of the season, music's stepchild deliberately set about learning drawing-room manners. The jazz episode in her subsequent development, which at first seemed a social setback, has instead enabled her to avoid some of the vapidity which too great a concentration on etiquette might otherwise have entailed.

But though Mr. Kern deserves the credit for introducing ragtime to musical literacy, that gentleman has on one occasion at least been found in a state of anguish, induced by a peep at one of his own songs as it came from the press. The tune, you took it, was still there, but the embellishments of which he had been fondest had been eliminated in the interests of the "little girls with little hands, who have not progressed very far in their study of the piano." Those little girls (Mr. Gershwin points out in his introduction to his present volume) buy most of the music; and as the censors of the Kern song well knew the limitations of those little hands, the composer suffered only, and acted not. To paraphrase the cigarette slogan: In popular music, it's sales.

With this situation in mind, I once transmitted to Mr. Gershwin the suggestion that his future songs be published with an appendix consisting of piano transcriptions, in which he could let himself go just as—to the delight of every listener—he would when playing them himself. The suggestion was not acted on, though one publisher has since added piano versions—overflowery ones suggesting the old-fashioned "fantasia"—to his ordinary song-sheets.

Here at last are eighteen of George Gershwin's best known songs, beautifully printed in their original and comparatively simple form, and each followed by the composer's own piano version of the chorus. The difficulty of these transcriptions is in several cases only moderate, and a reasonably competent amateur reader can extract private amusement from any of them. However, even the trade editions of Gershwin's songs (like Kern's and Rodgers') have regularly been both interesting and musicianly, and it is as a collection from the best of these, in permanent form, that this book is most valuable. Even among those who most passionately resent Gershwin's jazzing-up of the larger forms, there will be few to dispute his commanding position in this, his pristine field; and those may keep to their tents for the time.

Each song has a full-page illustration in colors by Aladjálov, mostly not slavishly dependent on the lyrics, but well matched with the graceful, cool and witty flavor of the songs themselves. In at least two cases these drawings represent imaginative leaps that are both bold and accurate—see "Strike Up the Band" and "My One and Only." The volume also testifies to the composer's good luck in having as a brother so talented a lyricist as Ira Gershwin; but the latter's quality is best displayed in the complete scores of "Strike Up the Band" and "Of Thee I Sing." What the book most needs is a sequel, containing, among other things, "Innocent Ingenue Baby," "The You Don't Know the Half of It, Dearie, Blues," "Seventeen and Twenty-one," "How Long Has This Been Going on?" "O Gee, O Joy," "Say So," "Blah-Blah Moon" and the unpublished "Blue Monday Blues" and "Blues in Two Keys."

ABBE NILES.

Book Notes

ART

REMBRANDT, by Arthur M. Hind. *Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 158 pages, 113 plates. $7.50.*

Problems of authenticity—which for most Rembrandt commentators (*e. g.*, Bode, Valentiner, De Groot) overshadow more purely esthetic questions of quality—never lure Professor Hind far from the threshold of his subject. He brings a full life of discriminate observation and carefully sifted research to the study of each phase of Rembrandt's work—etching and dry-point, drawing in wash and line, portrait, landscape and biblical painting. The relationship of Rembrandt to the students of his academy—the proceeds from the sale of whose work the master pocketed—forms the substance of a revealing chapter. On the whole the book is sound, stimulating in a mild, scholarly fashion, and more than adequately documented. Pertinent illustrations richly complement the text.

BIOGRAPHY

CARLYLE, by Louis Cazamian. *New York: The Macmillan Company. 300 pages. $2.75.*

Professor Cazamian's "Carlyle," published in 1913, is now reproduced in an excellent translation by Professor E. K. Brown. To view a great character through the eyes of a foreign critic is always a vivifying experience. Mr. Cazamian's monograph cannot, however, be described as a French critique on Carlyle. The author has been long recognized as an authority on English literature of the nineteenth century. Indeed, so completely has he identified himself with the period that although he wrote for a French audience his point of view is distinctly English. He sees Carlyle as an emanation of the primitive Anglo-Saxon spirit revived by Puritanism. To write with such understanding as M. Cazamian shows, of the German influences on Carlyle's early development, or the Teutophil extravagances of his later years, is a triumph of intellectual and political tolerance. No one has appraised more justly Carlyle's immense influence on his age, or written with greater enthusiasm of the poetic quality of his style,

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so different from the ideal of French prose. "The imagination animates and sustains the heavy agglomerations of words, gives them their intensity and makes them kindle with sudden flashes of light. By right of his imagination Carlyle is a great poet."

The Social Sciences

ECONOMIC TRACTS FOR THE TIMES, by G. D. H. Cole. *New York: The Macmillan Company. 327 pages. $4.*

The fifteen essays collected in this volume fall into three groups. The first and largest group deals with various aspects of the economic crisis, such as foreign trade, monetary policy, wages and employment, etc., besides giving an excellent general study of the crisis. In the reviewer's opinion, this is the most important section of the book. Mr. Cole's analysis of the great practical problems of the day is invariably thoroughgoing and many sided, and several of his conclusions regarding economic trends will be startling to the academic economists. Some of his proposals for the preservation of the capitalist system will be no less startling to business men and statesmen. The second group of papers deals with problems in economic theory. Mr. Cole points out many weaknesses in current academic economics, but he seems unwilling to break with it altogether. The third and shortest group deals with problems of socialization, mainly from the point of view of organization and administration. The last paper, "Why I Am a Socialist," shows its author in a very sympathetic light; it makes no attempt at explaining the general movement toward socialism.

UNION TACTICS AND ECONOMIC CHANGE, by Gladys L. Palmer. *Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 228 pages. $2.*

Dr. Gladys L. Palmer in this publication of the Industrial Research Department of the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, University of Pennsylvania, tells in broad outline what the three largest textile unions in Philadelphia did when they found their industries slipping away from them because of declining markets and the rise of competing centers of production where labor was cheap. The carpet weavers would not make concessions and their union collapsed in glory. The upholstery weavers would not budge at first, but now seem to have become amenable to the logic of the situation. The hosiery workers have collaborated most closely with their employers, even accepting deep wage cuts last year in order to bring pressure to bear upon the non-union manufacturers. The author recognizes that the justification for strategic retreats by unions depends upon whether one's philosophy of the labor movement is revolutionary or not. She herself believes that unions should preserve labor standards as long as possible and make an orderly withdrawal when necessary. She holds that successful unionism in a competitive industry must rely upon economic research.

Fiction

SKERRETT, by Liam O'Flaherty. *New York: Ray Long and Richard R. Smith. $2.50.*

According to one of his biographers, O'Flaherty was born a mystic, became a realist and now believes that true mysticism comes only through reality. "Skerrett" is a realistic novel with the tensity and high emotions of a poem. To the island of Nara off the Irish coast, David Skerrett, schoolmaster, came unwillingly in the prime of his life. Arrogant, passionate, brutal, a man who "bent his knee to no one," Skerrett defied all opponents. There were his disreputable pupils into whom he had to pound discipline by brute force. There was the avaricious parish priest Father Moclair, who became his bitterest enemy when he discovered in Skerrett a man strong enough to interfere with his desire to rule the island. And there was Fate itself, which had suddenly robbed him of his only comfort, a young son, and subsequently turned his wife into a lunatic and a drunkard. Through it all, Skerrett suffered like Job, fought like a demon, and died a madman. His life can be summed up in the author's own words: "He aimed at being a man who owns no master."

Contributors

Michael Farbman, a journalist specializing in economics and international relations, is editor of the yearbook, "Europa," and the author of "Piatiletka: The Story of the Five Year Plan," which was published last year in The New Republic Dollar Series.

H. N. Brailsford, The New Republic's London correspondent, has written a number of volumes on sociological and literary subjects, the most recent being "Rebel India," published in The New Republic Dollar Series.

Edith Abbott, who has been dean of the Graduate School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago since 1924, has published a number of books on social questions. She is an editor of The Social Service Review and Social Service Monographs.

Sidney Howard, author of "Luck Sam McCarver," "The Silver Cord," "They Knew What They Wanted," which received the Pulitzer prize in 1925, "Half Gods" and other plays, has been in Hollywood off and on since 1928, adapting plays for the movies. His adaptation, "The Late Christopher Bean," from the French of René Fauchois, is a theatrical opening of this week.

E. M. Benson is a free-lance critic who has contributed reviews and articles to The New York Evening Post, The Saturday Review and other magazines and newspapers.

Leo Wolman, who was appointed professor of Economics at Columbia University last year, was chairman of the Seven States Commission on Unemployment Insurance and is research director for the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America.

Edwin Seaver is at present in Connecticut working on his second novel, his first having been "The Company," which has been translated and published in Russia.

Abbe Niles, a member of the New York Bar, was a co-editor with W. C. Handy of "Blues," an anthology of Negro songs. He has reviewed musical shows for various papers and magazines and folk and popular music for The Bookman.

Walter Lippmann's

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